

SELECTIONS FROM ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE

THIRD EDITION

*Prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal
for the School Final Examination of 1958*



*Published for the
Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal by*
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

AND Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on *him*, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on *him*.

And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

From THE HOLY BIBLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, CHAPTER 10, VERSES 30-37

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

ON Christmas Day, in the year 1642, Isaac Newton was born at the small village of Woolsthorpe, in England. Little did his mother think, when she beheld her new-born babe that he was destined to explain many matters which had been a mystery ever since the creation of the world.



ISAAC NEWTON

Isaac's father being dead, Mrs Newton was married again to a clergyman, and went to reside to North Witham. Her son was left to the care of his good old grandmother, who was very kind to him and sent him to school. In his early years Isaac did not appear to be a very bright scholar, but was chiefly remarkable for his ingenuity in all mechanical occupations. He had a set of little tools and saws of various sizes manufactured by himself. With the aid of these Isaac contrived to make many curious articles, at which he worked with so much skill that he seemed to have been born with a saw or chisel in hand.

The neighbours looked with vast admiration at the things which Isaac manufactured. And his old grandmother, I suppose, was never weary of talking about him.

'He'll make a capital workman one of these days,' she would probably say. 'No fear but that Isaac will do well in the world and be a rich man before he dies.'

It is amusing to conjecture what were the anticipations of his grandmother and the neighbours about Isaac's future life. Some of them, perhaps, fancied

that he would make beautiful furniture of mahogany, rosewood, or polished oak, inlaid with ivory and ebony, and magnificently gilded. And then, doubtless, all the rich people would purchase these fine things to adorn their drawing-rooms. Others probably thought that little Isaac was destined to be an architect, and would build splendid mansions for the nobility and gentry, and churches too, with the tallest steeples that had ever been seen in England.

Some of his friends, no doubt, advised Isaac's grandmother to apprentice him to a clock-maker; for, besides his mechanical skill, the boy seemed to have a taste for mathematics, which would be very useful to him in that profession. And then, in due time, Isaac would set up for himself, and would manufacture curious clocks, like those that contain sets of dancing figures, which issue from the dial-plate when the hour is struck; or like those where a ship sails across the face of the clock, and is seen tossing up and down on the waves as often as the pendulum vibrates.

Indeed, there was some ground for supposing that Isaac would devote himself to the manufacture of clocks; since he had already made one of a kind which nobody had ever heard of before. It was set a-going, not by wheels and weights like other clocks, but by the dropping of water. This was an object of great wonderment to all the people round about; and it must be confessed that there are few boys, or men either, who could contrive to tell what o'clock it is by means of a bowl of water.

Besides the water-clock, Isaac made a sundial. Thus

his grandmother was never at a loss to know the hour; for the water-clock would tell it in the shade, and the dial in the sunshine. The sundial is said to be still in existence at Woolsthorpe, on the corner of the house where Isaac dwelt. If so, it must have marked the passage of every sunny hour that has elapsed since Isaac Newton was a boy. It marked all the famous moments of his life; it marked the hour of his death; and still the sunshine creeps slowly over it, as regularly as when Isaac first set it up.

Isaac possessed a wonderful faculty of acquiring knowledge by the simplest means. For instance, what method do you suppose he took to find out the strength of the wind? You will never guess how the boy could compel that unseen, inconstant, and ungovernable wonder, the wind, to tell him the measure of its strength. Yet nothing can be more simple. He jumped against the wind; and by the length of his jump he could calculate the force of a gentle breeze, a brisk gale, or a tempest. Thus, even in his boyish sports, he was continually searching out the secrets of philosophy.

Not far from his grandmother's residence there was a windmill which operated on a new plan. Isaac was in the habit of going thither frequently, and would spend whole hours in examining its various parts. While the mill was at rest he pried into its internal machinery. When its broad sails were set in motion by the wind, he watched the process by which the millstones were made to revolve and crush the grain that was put into the hopper. After gaining a thorough knowledge of its construction he was observed to be unusually busy with his tools.

It was not long before his grandmother and all the neighbourhood knew what Isaac had been about. He had constructed a model of the windmill, though not so large, I suppose, as one of the box-traps which boys set to catch squirrels, yet every part of the mill and its machinery was complete. Its little sails were neatly made of linen, and whirled round very swiftly when the mill was placed in a draught of air. Even a puff of wind from Isaac's mouth or from a pair of bellows was sufficient to set the sails in motion. And, what was most curious, if a handful of grains of wheat were put into the little hopper, they would soon be converted into snow-white flour.

Isaac's playmates were enchanted with his new windmill. They thought that nothing so pretty and so wonderful had ever been seen in the whole world.

'But, Isaac,' said one of them, 'you have forgotten one thing that belongs to a mill.'

'What is that?' asked Isaac; for he supposed that, from the roof of the mill to its foundation, he had forgotten nothing.

'Why, where is the miller?' said his friend.

'That is true,—I must look for one,' said Isaac; and he set himself to consider how the deficiency should be supplied.

He might easily have made the miniature figure of a man; but then it would not have been able to move about and perform the duties of a miller. As Captain Lemuel Gulliver had not yet discovered the island of Lilliput, Isaac did not know that there were little men in the world whose size was just suited to his wind-mill. It so happened, however, that a mouse had

just been caught in the trap; and, as no other miller could be found, Mr Mouse was appointed to that important office. The new miller made a very respectable appearance in his dark-gray coat. To be sure, he had not a very good character for honesty, and was suspected of sometimes stealing a portion of the grain which was given him to grind. But perhaps some two-legged millers are quite as dishonest as this small quadruped.

As Isaac grew older, it was found that he had far more important matters in his mind than the manufacture of toys like the little windmill. All day long, if left to himself, he was either absorbed in thought or engaged in some book of mathematics or natural philosophy. At night, I think it probable, he looked up with reverential curiosity to the stars, and wondered whether they were worlds like our own, and how great was their distance from the earth, and what was the power that kept them in their courses. Perhaps, even so early in life, Isaac Newton felt a presentiment that he should be able, hereafter, to answer all these questions.

When Isaac was fourteen years old, his mother's second husband being now dead, she wished her son to leave school and assist her in managing the farm at Woolsthorpe. For a year or two, therefore, he tried to turn his attention to farming. But his mind was so bent on becoming a scholar that his mother sent him back to school, and afterwards to the University of Cambridge.

I have now finished my anecdotes of Isaac Newton's boyhood. My story would be far too long were I to

mention all the splendid discoveries which he made after he came to be a man. He was the first that found out the nature of light; for, before his day, nobody could tell what the sunshine was composed of. You remember, I suppose, the story of an apple's falling on his head, and thus leading him to discover the force of gravitation, which keeps the heavenly bodies in their courses. When he had once got hold of this idea, he never permitted his mind to rest until he had searched out all the laws by which the planets are guided through the sky. This he did as thoroughly as if he had gone up among the stars and tracked them in their orbits. The boy had found out the mechanism of a windmill; the man explained to his fellow-men the mechanism of the universe.

While making these researches he was accustomed to spend night after night in a lofty tower, gazing at the heavenly bodies through a telescope. His mind was lifted far above the things of this world. He may be said, indeed, to have spent the greater part of his life in worlds that lie thousands and millions of miles away; for where the thoughts and the heart are, there is our true existence.

Did you never hear the story of Newton, and his little dog Diamond? One day when he was fifty years old, and had been hard at work more than twenty years studying the theory of light, he went out of his chamber, leaving his little dog asleep before the fire. On the table lay a heap of manuscript papers, containing all the discoveries which Newton had made during those twenty years. When his master was gone, up rose little Diamond, jumped upon the table, and

overthrew the lighted candle. The papers immediately caught fire.

Just as the destruction was completed Newton opened the chamber door, and perceived that the labours of twenty years were reduced to a heap of ashes. There stood little Diamond, the author of all the mischief. Almost any other man would have sentenced the dog to immediate death. But Newton patted him on the head with his usual kindness, although grief was at his heart.

‘O Diamond, Diamond,’ exclaimed he, ‘thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!’

This incident affected his health and spirits for some time afterwards; but, from his conduct towards the little dog, you may judge what was the sweetness of his temper.

Newton lived to be a very old man, and acquired great renown, and was made a member of Parliament, and received the honour of knighthood from the king. But he cared little for earthly fame and honours, and felt no pride in the vastness of his knowledge. All that he had learned only made him feel how little he knew in comparison to what remained to be known.

‘I seem to myself like a child,’ observed he, ‘playing on the sea-shore, and picking up here and there a curious shell or a pretty pebble, while the boundless ocean of Truth lies undiscovered before me.’

At last, in 1727, when he was fourscore and five years old, Sir Isaac Newton died,—or rather he ceased to live on earth. We may be permitted to believe that he is still searching out the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Creator as earnestly, and with even more

success, than while his spirit animated a mortal body. He has left a fame behind him which will be as enduring as if his name were written in letters of light formed by the stars upon the midnight sky.

From THE COMPLETE WORKS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, VOL. XII

CROSSING THE DESERT

ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE

As long as you are journeying in the interior of the Desert you have no particular point to make for as your resting-place. The endless sands yield nothing but small stunted shrubs; even these fail after the first two or three days, and from that time you pass over broad plains—you pass over newly-reared hills—you pass through valleys dug out by last week's storm, and the hills and the valleys are sand, sand, sand, still sand, and only sand, and sand, and sand again. The earth is so samely, that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven, I mean, in sense of sky.

(You look to the Sun, for he is your taskmaster, and by him you know the measure of the work that you have done, and the measure of the work that remains for you to do.) He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then, for the first hour of the day, as you move forward on your camel, he stands at your near side, and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you; then for a while, and a long while, you see him no more, for you are veiled and shrouded, and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides over head, by the touch of his

flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and the web of the silk that veils your eyes, and the glare of the outer light.

Time labours on — your skin glows, your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same pattern in the silk, and the same glare of light beyond; but conquering Time marches on, and by and by the descending sun has compassed the heaven, and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand right along on the way for Persia. Then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses: the fair, wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more — comes blushing, yet still comes on; comes burning with blushes, yet comes and clings to his side. ✓

Then begins your season of rest. The world about you is all your own, and there, where you will, you pitch your solitary tent; there is no living thing to dispute your choice. When at last the spot had been fixed upon and we came to a halt, one of the Arabs would touch the chest of my camel, and utter at the same time a peculiar gurgling sound. The beast instantly understood and obeyed the sign, and slowly sunk under me, till she brought her body to a level with the ground; then gladly enough I alighted. The rest of the camels were unloaded and turned loose to browse upon the shrubs of the Desert, where shrubs there were, or where these failed, to wait for the small

quantity of food that was allowed them out of our stores.

My servants, helped by the Arabs, busied themselves in pitching the tent and kindling the fire. Whilst this was doing, I used to walk away towards the East, confiding in the print of my foot as a guide for my return. Apart from the cheering voices of my attendants, I could better know and feel the loneliness of the Desert. The influence of such scenes, however, was not of a softening kind, but filled me rather with a sort of childish exultation in the self-sufficiency which enabled me to stand thus alone in the wideness of Asia — a short-lived pride, for wherever man wanders, he still remains tethered by the chain that links him to his kind; and so when the night closed round me, I began to return — to return as it were to my own gate. Reaching at last some high ground, I could see, and see with delight, the fire of our small encampment; and when, at last, I regained the spot, it seemed a very home that had sprung up for me in the midst of these solitudes. My Arabs were busy with their bread — Mysseri rattling tea-cups,—the little kettle with her odd, oldmaidish looks sat humming away old songs about England, and two or three yards from the fire my tent stood prim and tight with open portal, and with welcoming look.

Sometimes in the earlier part of my journey the night-breeze blew coldly; when that happened, the dry sand was heaped up outside round the skirts of the tent, and so the Wind that everywhere else could sweep as he listed along those dreary plains, was forced to turn aside in his course, and make way, as he ought, for the Englishman. Then within my tent there were

heaps of luxuries — dining-rooms, dressing-rooms, libraries, bedrooms, drawing-rooms, oratories — all crowded into the space of a hearthrug. The first night, I remember, with my books and maps about me, I wanted a light. They brought me a taper, and immediately from out of the silent Desert there rushed in a flood of life, unseen before. Monsters of moths of all shapes and hues, that never before perhaps had looked upon the shining of a flame, now madly thronged into my tent, and dashed through the fire of the candle till they fairly extinguished it with their burning limbs. Those who had failed in attaining this martyrdom suddenly became serious, and clung despondently to the canvas.

By and by there was brought to me the fragrant tea, and big masses of scorched and scorching toast, and the butter that had come all the way to me in this Desert of Asia, from out of that poor, dear, starving Ireland. I feasted like a king, — like four kings, — like a boy in the fourth form.

When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loath to give back to the waste this little spot of ground that had glowed for a while with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. One by one the cloaks, the saddles, the baggage, the hundred things that strewed the ground and made it look so familiar — all these were taken away, and laid upon the camels. A speck in the broad tracts of Asia remained still impressed with the mark of patent portmanteaus and the heels of London boots; the embers of the fire lay black and cold upon the sand; and these were the signs we left.

My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall; the pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home but only a pole and a bundle. The encroaching Englishman was off, and instant upon the fall of the canvas, like an owner who had waited and watched, the Genius of the Desert stalked in.

From EOTHEN

NATURE AND SCIENCE

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY



THOMAS HUXLEY

A GREAT many of the things brought to our knowledge by our senses, such as houses and furniture, carriages and machines, are termed artificial things or objects, because they have been shaped by the art of man; indeed, they are generally said to be made by man. But a far greater number of things owe nothing to the hand of man, and would be just what they are if mankind did not exist—such as the sky and the clouds; the sun, moon, and stars; the sea with its rocks and shingly or sandy shores; the hills and dales of the land: and all wild plants and animals.

Things of this kind are termed natural objects, and to the whole of them we give the name of Nature.

Although this distinction between nature and art, between natural and artificial things is very easily made and very convenient, it is needful to remember that in the long run, we owe everything to nature; that even these artificial objects, which we commonly say are made by man, are only natural objects, shaped and moved by men; and that in the sense of creating, that is to say of causing something to exist which did not exist in some other shape before, man can make nothing whatever. Moreover, we must recollect that what men do in the way of shaping and bringing together or separating natural objects, is done in virtue of the powers which they themselves possess as natural objects.

Artificial things are, in fact, all produced by the action of that part of nature which we call mankind, upon the rest.

Among natural objects, as we have seen, there are some that we can get hold of and turn to account. But all the greatest things in nature and the links of cause and effect which connect them, are utterly beyond our reach. The sun rises and sets; the moon and the stars move through the sky; fine weather and storms, cold and heat, alternate. The sea changes from violent disturbance to glassy calm, as the winds sweep over it with varying strength or die away: innumerable plants and animals come into being and vanish again, without our being able to exert the slightest influence on the majestic procession of the series of great natural events. Hurricanes ravage one

spot; earthquakes destroy another; volcanic eruptions lay waste a third. A fine season scatters wealth and abundance here, and long drought brings pestilence and famine there. In all such cases, the direct influence of man avails him nothing; and, as long as he is ignorant, he is the mere sport of the greater powers of nature.

But the first thing that men learned, as soon as they began to study nature carefully, was that some events take place in regular order and that same causes always give rise to the same effects. The sun always rises on one side and sets on the other side of the sky; the changes of the moon follow one another in the same order and with similar intervals; some stars never sink below the horizon of the place in which we live; the seasons are more or less regular; water always flows down-hill; fire always burns; plants grow up from seed and yield seed, from which like plants grow up again; animals are born, grow, reach maturity, and die, age after age in the same way. Thus the notion of an order of nature and of a fixity in the relation of cause and effect between things gradually entered the minds of men. So far as such order prevailed it was felt the things were explained; while the things that could not be explained were said to have come about by chance, or to happen by accident.

But the more carefully nature has been studied, the more widely has order been found to prevail, while what seemed disorder has proved to be nothing but complexity, until at present, no one is so foolish as to believe that anything happens by chance, or that there are any real accidents, in the sense of events which have no cause. And if we say that a thing

happens by chance, everybody admits that all we really mean is that we do not know its cause or the reason why that particular thing happens. Chance and accidents are only aliases of ignorance.

From ESSAYS

THE HAPPY PRINCE

OSCAR WILDE



OSCAR WILDE

HIGH above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. 'He is as beautiful as a weathercock,' remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; 'only not quite so useful,' he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

'Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?' asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. 'The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything.'

'I am glad there is some one in the world who is quite happy,' muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

'He looks just like an angel,' said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white pinafores.

'How do you know?' said the Mathematical Master, 'you have never seen one.'

'Ah! but we have, in our dreams,' answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

'Shall I love you?' said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

'It is a ridiculous attachment,' twittered the other Swallows; 'she has no money, and far too many relations'; and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. 'She has no conversation,' he said, 'and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind.' And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtses. 'I admit that she is domestic,' he continued, 'but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently should love travelling also.'

'Will you come away with me?' he said finally to her, but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

'You have been trifling with me,' he cried. 'I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!' and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. 'Where shall I put up?' he said; 'I hope the town has made preparations.'

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

'I will put up there,' he cried; 'it is a fine position, with plenty of fresh air.' So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

'I have a golden bedroom,' he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. 'What a curious thing!' he cried; 'there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness.'

Then another drop fell.

'What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?' he said; 'I must look for a good chimney-pot,' and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw—Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

'Who are you?' he said.

'I am the Happy Prince.'

'Why are you weeping then?' asked the Swallow; 'you have quite drenched me.'

'When I was alive and had a human heart,' answered the statue, 'I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep.'

'What! is he not solid gold?' said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

'Far away,' continued the statue in a low musical voice, 'far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move.'

'I am waited for in Egypt,' said the Swallow. 'My

friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad.'

'I don't think I like boys,' answered the Swallow. 'Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect.'

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. 'It is very cold here,' he said; 'but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger.'

'Thank you, little Swallow,' said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. 'How wonderful the stars are,' he said to her, 'and how wonderful is the power of love!'

'I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball,' she answered; 'I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy.'

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. 'How cool I feel!' said the boy, 'I must be getting better': and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. 'It is curious,' he remarked, 'but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold.'

'That is because you have done a good action,' said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. 'What a remarkable phenomenon!' said the Professor of Ornithology as he was passing over the bridge. 'A swallow in winter!' And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Everyone quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

'To-night I go to Egypt,' said the Swallow, and

he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, 'What a distinguished stranger!' So he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. 'Have you any commissions for Egypt?' he cried; 'I am just starting.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me one night longer?'

'I am waited for in Egypt,' answered the Swallow. 'To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite house sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint.'

'I will wait with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. 'Shall I take him another ruby?'

'Alas! I have no ruby now,' said the Prince; 'my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy firewood, and finish his play.'

'Dear Prince,' said the Swallow, 'I cannot do that'; and he began to weep.

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye, and flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

'I am beginning to be appreciated,' he cried; 'this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play,' and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. 'Heave a-hoy!' they shouted as each chest came up. 'I am going to Egypt!' cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

'I am come to bid you good-bye,' he cried.

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me one night longer?'

'It is winter,' answered the Swallow, 'and the chill

snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire, shall be as blue as the great sea.'

'In the square below,' said the Happy Prince, 'there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her.'

'I will stay with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, 'but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. 'What a lovely bit of glass!' cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. 'You are blind now,' he said, 'so I will stay with you always.'

'No, little Swallow,' said the poor prince, 'you must go away to Egypt.'

'I will stay with you always,' said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch goldfish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

'Dear little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there.'

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. 'How hungry we are!' they said. 'You must not lie here,' shouted the watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

'I am covered with fine gold,' said the Prince, 'you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy.'

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. 'We have bread now!' they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just enough strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. 'Goodbye, dear Prince!' he murmured, 'will you let me kiss your hand?'

'I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you.'

'It is not to Egypt that I am going,' said the Swallow. 'I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?'

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: 'Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!' he said.

'How shabby, indeed!' cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor; and they went up to look at it.

'The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer,' said the Mayor; 'in fact, he is little better than a beggar!'

'Little better than a beggar,' said the Town Councillors.

'And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!' continued the Mayor. 'We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here.' And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. 'As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful,' said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. 'We must have another statue, of course,' he said, 'and it shall be a statue of myself.'

'Of myself,' said each of the Town Councillors,

and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

'What a strange thing!' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. 'This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

'Bring me the two most precious things in the city,' said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

'You have rightly chosen,' said God, 'for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.'

From THE WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE

THE LOST STICK

E. V. LUCAS

At this minute somewhere there is a walking-stick whose one wish in life is to leave its present user and get back to me, its rightful owner; but what can it do? A mere voiceless piece of wood, what can it do? Yet all its thoughts I know are with me.

The malignity of inanimate objects is a theme which has often occupied humorous writers—I remember James Payn being very characteristic about it: a dropped collar stud, I think it was, that set him off—but what fills me with concern is their inanimacy. It is not their bad qualities that are distressing me, but their powerlessness.

And not only their powerlessness, but the friendli-

ness behind it. For things that have been our close companions for a long while, such as watches, rings, necklaces, cigarcases, although we refer to their inanimacy, surely must have some quality of warmth and devotion in excess of those that have just left the factory and no one has yet acquired! It would be treachery not to believe that.

This lost stick now, which was taken by mistake from a club stand a few weeks ago and has never been returned—I know that it wants me back as much as I want it. I know exactly what it would say had it a tongue.

‘Take me back,’ it would say—is saying all the time in its dumb way—to the miscreant who carried it off, ‘to my real master, because he needs me and I need him. We belong to each other; he was my first owner ever since I came from Madagascar and was polished and ferruled and put in that shop in the Avenue de l’Opera, where he bought me in 1919. I kept so straight for him, so strong and yet so light; and I had just the handle he likes, sloping upwards a little.

‘We went everywhere together, first in Paris and then in Marseilles and all about there, up and down the noisy Cannebiere; along the Corniche; he even took me on a boat to the Chateau d’If, and as far afield as Aix, (to try and find Cezanne’s house); and then on a ship to the East. I went into Simon Arzt’s (which everyone calls Simon Artz’s) at Port Said with him when he bought his first topee—not a very becoming one, I thought, but few men look well in topees—and I helped to support his steps under the heat of Aden, when he first wore the topee and was so much surprised

when a dozen little black boys seized the side of the boat as it reached the landing-stage and demanded a tip on the strength of its being Christmas Day, which we had completely forgotten. I was useful too in repulsing the same boys—or others, for they are all alike—as they followed us in a pack crying ‘Merry Christmas’ and holding out their impudent black hands.

‘I was with him in Bombay, where, however, he walked little; and in Delhi, where in the early morning he walked much; and in Lucknow, where we went to the races and didn’t do so badly; and in the stifling streets of Benares among pilgrims and cows; and in Calcutta, where we went to the races again and lost all that Lucknow had provided, and more. Every evening just before sunset he took me to the Maidan and walked across the grass to the fort and back through the spicy golden haze.

‘I was with him in the Malay States and had the inexpressible pride and delight of hearing him repudiate the offer of a Penang lawyer — by which I don’t mean a six-and-eightpenny legal adviser, but a local walking-stick of inferior quality. Nor did he, as most travellers do, bring away a Malacca cane: which I consider another proof of his nobility of character.

‘I was with him when he ate his first mangosteen — that (as I heard him say) ecstatic moment in life.

‘I was with him when the police of Penang mistook him — “The man in the blue collar” — for an Anarchist, on the occasion of the Governor’s first visit to that exceedingly sultry spot, little thinking that three or four days later, alighting from a special train at a station between

Kwala Lumpur and Singapore, he was to be mistaken for the Governor himself (who had not been seen there) and saluted accordingly.

‘And then came some more wretched sea, when I lay idle in a cabin and never touched his hand. And our next adventures were in Hong-Kong, where I was with him in the musky narrow streets, and on the top of the mountain which the funicular climbs at such a slope that all the houses seem to be falling down; and then again in Shanghai, where we walked for miles together through the real Chinese quarter.

‘Then more sea—very rough this time—and we landed at Kobe, in Japan, and were inseparable again for a month, and for a week of it were high in the mountains, sometimes in the snow, walking hour after hour. I liked that. It was good after the cabin rack.

‘I was with him on that windy ridge above Honolulu, where, no matter how peaceful the day, a tornado is always blowing. I was with him on the Waikiki beach, where the bathers ride on the crests of the waves on planks; but he did not take me into the sea with him. I was with him in the Aquarium there, where the fish are so unlike all other fish and often so like people you know.

‘And then came America, where I was almost the only walking-stick between the Pacific and the Atlantic...

‘And since then there have been two years in this England of ours, where the best walking of all is to be had. . .

‘And I had looked forward to the time when my master’s hand would weigh heavily and more heavily on my head and it would be such a privilege to bear

him up, strong with service. And after that . . . well, anyone might have me after that, for I should be lost indeed. . .

‘But I have said enough. So now, my new owner—I cannot call you “master”; that other one is my master—will you not take me back to the Club and give me to the Hall Porter, who has been waiting for me for weeks? Because you really don’t like me as much as your old one—or if you do you are not worthy—and your old one probably is pining too. For we sticks can get fond of quite inferior persons. I don’t say your stick is pining just as I am. That is unlikely, for no one could have such a master as mine; but it may be pining all the same.’

That is what I like to think of my lost stick as saying.

From THE LUCK OF THE YEAR

THE TELESCOPE

G. C. THORNLEY

THE invention of the telescope led to enormous progress in the study of the heavens, and is chiefly responsible for our modern ideas of the universe. As we turn to these ideas, we must remember how much our knowledge has advanced since the time of Galileo, and we must be prepared for some surprises. Modern astronomical ideas are astonishing, and to some people incredible. For one thing, astronomers are able to measure the distances between the different things in the universe. The measurement is not exact, but we can get a fairly good idea of these distances. Some of them are enormous. They are so enormous that astronomers

long ago abandoned the use of miles and kilometres to express them. It means little to an ordinary man when he reads of a billion miles. A billion is a million million. He probably thinks that there is not much difference between a million and a billion; they are both huge numbers and mean rather a lot. Is there much difference? Let us take an example. A million seconds make about eleven and a half days and nights; a billion seconds make more than thirty thousand years.

The figures in which astronomers deal are so huge that the phrase 'astronomical figure' has come into use in English to mean an enormous figure. To make it easier to discuss and compare the tremendous distances between the objects in the universe, it was decided to introduce a new unit of measurement called the light-year. A light-year is a *distance*, the distance that light travels in one year. Light travels a long way in a year, for its speed is 186,000 miles, or 300,000 kilometres, a second. If we say that a star is 100 light-years away from us, we mean that its light takes 100 years to cover the distance between us and the star; the light which enters our eyes when we look at it left it 100 years before.

Let us now consider the modern view of the universe. We will begin with the sun and its family, for this is comparatively small. The sun is a star. It looks bigger than the other stars because it is much nearer to us than they are. Light takes only about eight minutes to reach us from the sun, but the nearest star is about three light-years away. The sun is about 93,000,000 miles from us, and round it go the nine planets, each travelling in an ellipse one outside the other, and each prevented

from escaping into space by the gravitation of the sun. Two of the planets, Mercury and Venus, are nearer to the sun than we are.

Planets have no light of their own; they shine because they reflect the light of the sun. You will remember that Galileo looked at Venus with his new telescope, and noticed that it looked sometimes rather like our moon when the surface facing us is not wholly lit up by the sun. This proved that it is nearer the sun than we are, because if it were farther away we should always see its full shining face.

Outside the path of the earth round the sun comes the planet Mars. Mars has attracted more attention from the average man than the other planets. It can be seen fairly well sometimes. In 1887, when it was at its nearest position to us, the Italian astronomer Schiaparelli startled the world by saying that he could see straight lines on Mars, and he called them channels. The Italian word for channels is *canali*, and thus the idea arose that there were canals on Mars. Many other astronomers later thought they could see these straight lines, and were filled with excitement. If there were canals, was it possible that there were men, or some kind of living creatures, who had made them? These lines may not, in fact, be canals, but it seems possible that there is some sort of plant life on Mars. There are also white patches at the north and south poles in the winter, which may be ice; the white patches disappear in the long Martian summer, and this may show that the ice is melting. If there is water and plant life, is there animal life? No one can answer the question with certainty, but at least the existence of such life is doubtful, for Mars seems to

be a very cold place with a temperature well below zero centigrade, and its air appears to be very thin.

The planet outside Mars is Jupiter, the largest of all. It has four large and five small moons, which revolve round it as our moon revolves round the earth. Next comes the beautiful planet Saturn with its famous ring. This ring looks rather like a white gramophone record with its centre cut out. Inside it is Saturn itself. The ring was a puzzle to astronomers for a long time, but it is now believed to be composed of a large number of small bits of ice. Saturn has nine moons that we know of, and there may be a tenth.

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The five planets, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, have been known from early times. It was not until 1781 that the next one, Uranus, was discovered. A famous astronomer and maker of telescopes, Sir William Herschel, was examining some stars through one of his instruments when he caught sight of a body which he had not noticed before. After watching it for some time, he found that it had the motion of a planet and belonged to the sun's family. This body is now known as the planet Uranus, though Herschel gave it another name.

The study of the heavens had now advanced to such an extent that it was noticed that Uranus did not move exactly as it should in its journey round the sun. Some explanation of its irregular course was sought, and two mathematicians worked out the position of another planet which must be disturbing the motion of Uranus by its gravitational pull. These remarkable men were the French astronomer, Leverrier, and the English

mathematician, Adams. When a telescope was pointed to that part of the sky which they had indicated, the next planet, Neptune, was found. What an astonishing example of the power of mathematics this was! In 1930 the last planet that we know of, Pluto, was also discovered as a result of mathematical calculation. Though much nearer to us than the nearest star, it is so very far away that we know little about it.

Thus there are nine known planets revolving round the sun. There are other bodies also, but these planets form the most important part of the sun's family. Where did they come from? According to an old theory, they were once part of the sun and were torn out of it in a gaseous state by the attraction of another star which came near to the sun. But astronomers have now abandoned this theory and think that the planets were formed when another star, which was revolving round the sun, exploded violently. The explosion drove most of it far away into space, but small amounts of gas were left near the sun. This gas gradually cooled down into solid masses which broke up into pieces, forming the planets that we know.

*From POWER AND PROGRESS
(THE BRIDGE SERIES)*

THE TIGER SMILED

JIM CORBETT



JIM CORBETT

ABOUT a hundred yards along the path I came to a ravine. On the far side of this the path entered very heavy undergrowth, and as it was inadvisable to go

into thick cover with two men following me, I decided to take to the ravine, follow it down to its junction with the valley, work up the valley and pick up the path on the far side of the undergrowth.

The ravine was about ten yards wide and four or five feet deep, and as I stepped down into it a nightjar fluttered off a rock on which I had put my hand. On looking at the spot from which the bird had risen, I saw two eggs. These eggs, straw-coloured, with rich brown markings, were of a most unusual shape, one being long and very pointed, while the other was as round as a marble; and as my collection lacked nightjar eggs I decided to add this odd clutch to it. I had no receptacle of any kind in which to carry the eggs, so cupping my left hand I placed the eggs in it and packed them round with a little moss.

As I went down the ravine the banks became higher, and sixty yards from where I had entered it I came on a deep drop of some twelve to fourteen feet. The water that rushes down all these hill ravines in the rains had worn the rock as smooth as glass, and as it was too steep to offer a foothold I handed the rifle to the men and, sitting on the edge, proceeded to slide down. My feet had hardly touched the sandy bottom when the two men, with a flying leap, landed one on either side of me, and thrusting the rifle into my hand asked in a very agitated manner if I had heard the tiger. As a matter of fact I had heard nothing, possibly due to the scraping of my clothes on the rocks, and when questioned, the men said that what they had heard was a deep-throated growl from somewhere close at hand, but exactly from which direction the sound

had come, they were unable to say. Tigers do not betray their presence by growling when looking for their dinner and the only, and very unsatisfactory, explanation I can offer is that the tigress followed us after we left the open ground, and on seeing that we were going down the ravine had gone ahead and taken up a position where the ravine narrowed to half its width; and that when she was on the point of springing out on me, I had disappeared out of sight down the slide and she had involuntarily given vent to her disappointment with a low growl. Not a satisfactory reason, unless one assumes—without any reason—that she had selected me for her dinner, and therefore had no interest in the two men.

Where the three of us now stood in a bunch we had the smooth steep rock behind us, to our right a wall of rock slightly leaning over the ravine and fifteen feet high, and to our left a tumbled bank of big rocks thirty or forty feet high. The sandy bed of the ravine, on which we were standing, was roughly forty feet long and ten feet wide. At the lower end of this sandy bed a great pine tree had fallen across, damming the ravine, and the collection of sand was due to the dam. The wall of overhanging rock came to an end twelve or fifteen feet from the fallen tree, and as I approached the end of the rock, my feet making no sound on the sand, I very fortunately noticed that the sandy bed continued round to the back of the rock.

This rock about which I have said so much I can best describe as a giant school slate, two feet thick at its lower end, and standing up—not quite perpendicularly—on one of its long sides.

As I stepped clear of the giant slate, I looked behind me over my right shoulder and—looked straight into the tigress's face.

I would like you to have a clear picture of the situation.

The sandy bed behind the rock was quite flat. To the right of it was the smooth slate fifteen feet high and leaning slightly outwards, to the left of it was a scoured-out steep bank also some fifteen feet high overhung by a dense tangle of thorn bushes, while at the far end was a slide similar to, but a little higher than, the one I had glissaded down. The sandy bed, enclosed by these three natural walls, was about twenty feet long and half as wide, and lying on it, with her fore-paws stretched out and her hind legs well tucked under her, was the tigress. Her head, which was raised a few inches off her paws, was eight feet (measured later) from me, and on her face was a smile, similar to that one sees on the face of a dog welcoming his master home after a long absence.

Two thoughts flashed through my mind, one, that it was up to me to make the first move, and the other, that the move would have to be made in such a manner as not to alarm the tigress or make her nervous.

The rifle was in my right hand held diagonally across my chest, with the safety-catch off, and in order to get it to bear on the tigress the muzzle would have to be swung round three-quarters of a circle.

The movement of swinging round the rifle, with one hand, was begun very slowly, and hardly perceptibly, and when a quarter of a circle had been made, the stock came in contact with my right side. It was

now necessary to extend my arm, and as the stock cleared my side, the swing was very slowly continued. My arm was now at full stretch and the weight of the rifle was beginning to tell. Only a little further now for the muzzle to go, and the tigress—who had not once taken her eyes off mine—was still looking up at me, with the pleased expression still on her face.

How long it took the rifle to make the three-quarter circle, I am not in a position to say. To me, looking into the tigress's eyes and unable therefore to follow the movement of the barrel, it appeared that my arm was paralysed, and that the swing would never be completed. However, the movement was completed at last, and as soon as the rifle was pointing at the tigress's body, I pressed the trigger.

I heard the report, exaggerated in that restricted space, and felt the jar of the recoil, and but for these tangible proofs that the rifle had gone off, I might, for all the immediate result the shot produced, have been in the grip of one of those awful nightmares in which triggers are vainly pulled of rifles that refuse to be discharged at the critical moment.

For a perceptible fraction of time the tigress remained perfectly still, and then, very slowly, her head sank on to her outstretched paws, while at the same time a jet of blood issued from the bullet-hole. The bullet had injured her spine and shattered the upper portion of her heart.

The two men who were following a few yards behind me, and who were separated from the tigress by the thickness of the rock, came to a halt when they saw me stop and turn my head. They knew instinctively that

I had seen the tigress and judged from my behaviour that she was close at hand, and Madho Singh said afterwards that he wanted to call out and tell me to drop the eggs and get both hands on the rifle. When I had fired my shot and lowered the point of the rifle on to my toes, Madho Singh, at a sign, came forward to relieve me of it, for very suddenly my legs appeared to be unable to support me, so I made for the fallen tree and sat down. Even before looking at the pads of her feet I knew it was the Chowgarh tigress. I had sent to the Happy Hunting Grounds, and that the shears that had assisted her to cut the threads of sixty-four human lives—the people of the district put the number at twice that figure—had, while the game was in her hands, turned, and cut the thread of her own life.

Three things, each of which would appear to you to have been to my disadvantage, were actually in my favour. These were (a) the eggs in my left hand, (b) the light rifle I was carrying, and (c) the tiger being a man-eater. If I had not had the eggs in my hand I should have had both hands on the rifle, and when I looked back and saw the tiger at such close quarters I should instinctively have tried to swing round to face her, and the spring that was arrested by my lack of movement would inevitably have been launched. Again, if the rifle had not been a light one it would not have been possible for me to have moved it in the way it was imperative I should move it, and then discharge it at the full extent of my arm. And lastly, if the tiger had been just an ordinary tiger, and not a man-eater, it would, on finding itself cornered, have

made for the opening and wiped me out of the way; and to be wiped out of the way by a tiger usually has fatal results.

While the men made a detour and went up the hill to free the buffalo and secure the rope, which was needed for another and more pleasant purpose, I climbed over the rocks and went up the ravine to restore the eggs to their rightful owner. I plead guilty of being as superstitious as my brother sportsmen, for three long periods, extending over a whole year, I had tried—and tried hard—to get a shot at the tigress, and had failed; and now within a few minutes of having picked up the eggs my luck had changed.

The eggs, which all this time had remained safely in the hollow of my left hand, were still warm when I replaced them in the little depression in the rock that did duty as a nest, and when I again passed that way half an hour later, they had vanished under the brooding mother whose colouring so exactly matched the mottled rock that it was difficult for me, who knew the exact spot where the nest was situated, to distinguish her from her surroundings.

From MAN EATERS OF KUMAON

THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS¹

NORMAN MCKINNEL

CHARACTERS

THE BISHOP

MARIE

THE CONVICT

SERGEANT OF GENDARMES

PERSOME, *the Bishop's sister, a widow.*

PLACE. *France, about thirty miles from Paris.*

SCENE: *The kitchen of the BISHOP's cottage. It is plainly but substantially furnished. Doors R. and L. and L. C. Window R. C. Fireplace with heavy mantelpiece down R. Oak settle with cushions behind door L. C. Table in Window R. C. with writing materials and crucifix (wood). Eight-day clock R. of window. Kitchen dresser with cupboard to lock down L. Oak dining table R. C. Chairs, books, etc. Winter wood scene without. On the mantelpiece are two very handsome candlesticks which look strangely out of place with their surroundings.*

MARIE and PERSOME discovered. MARIE stirring some soup on the fire. PERSOME laying the cloth, etc.

PERSOME. Marie, isn't the soup boiling yet?

MARIE. Not yet, madam.

PERSOME. Well it ought to be. You haven't tended the fire properly, child.

MARIE. But, madam, you yourself made the fire up.

PERSOME. Don't answer me back like that. It is rude.

MARIE. Yes, madam.

¹Applications regarding performances of this play should be addressed to Messrs Thacker & Co., Rampart Row, Bombay who are representatives in India for Messrs Samuel French Limited, 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London.

PERSOME. Then don't let me have to rebuke you again.

MARIE. No, madam.

PERSOME. I wonder where my brother can be. It is after eleven o'clock [*looking at the clock*] and no sign of him. Marie!

MARIE. Yes, madam.

PERSOME. Did Monseigneur the Bishop leave any message for me?

MARIE. No, madam.

PERSOME. Did he tell you where he was going?

MARIE. Yes, madam.

PERSOME. 'Yes, madam' [*imitating*]. Then why haven't you told me, stupid!

MARIE. Madam didn't ask me.

PERSOME. But that is no reason for your not telling me, is it?

MARIE. Madam said only this morning I was not to chatter, so I thought—

PERSOME. Ah, mon Dieu, you thought! Ah! It is hopeless.

MARIE. Yes, madam.

PERSOME. Don't keep saying 'Yes, madam', like a parrot, nincompoop.

MARIE. No, madam.

PERSOME. Well. Where did monseigneur say he was going?

MARIE. To my mother's, madam.

PERSOME. To your mother's indeed! And why, pray?

MARIE. Monseigneur asked me how she was, and I told him she was feeling poorly.

PERSOME. You told him she was feeling poorly, did you? And so my brother is to be kept out of his bed, and go without his supper because you told him she was feeling poorly. There's gratitude for you!

MARIE. Madam, the soup is boiling!

PERSOME. Then pour it out, fool, and don't chatter. [*Marie about to do so*] No, no. Not like that, here let me do it, and do you put the salt-cellars on the table—the silver ones.

MARIE. The silver ones, madam?

PERSOME. Yes, the silver ones. Are you deaf as well as stupid?

MARIE. They are sold, madam.

PERSOME. Sold! [*With horror*] Sold! Are you mad? Who sold them? Why were they sold?

MARIE. Monseigneur the Bishop told me this afternoon while you were out to take them to Monsieur Gervais who has often admired them, and sell them for as much as I could.

PERSOME. But you had no right to do so without asking me.

MARIE. But, madam, Monseigneur the Bishop told me [*with awe*].

PERSOME. Monseigneur the Bishop is a—ahem! But, but what can he have wanted with the money?

MARIE. Pardon, madam, but I think it was for Mere Gringoire.

PERSOME. Mere Gringoire indeed! Mere Gringoire! What, the old witch who lives at the top of the hill, and who says she is bedridden because she is too lazy to do any work? And what did Meré Gringoire want with the money, pray?

MARIE. Madam, it was for the rent. The bailiff would not wait any longer and threatened to turn her out to-day if it were not paid, so she sent little Jean to monseigneur to ask for help and—

PERSOME. Oh mon Dieu! It is hopeless, hopeless. We shall have nothing left. His estate is sold, his savings have gone. His furniture, everything. Were it not for my little dot we should starve, and now my beautiful—beautiful (*sob*) salt-cellars. Ah, it is too much, too much. [*She breaks down crying.*]

MARIE. Madam, I am sorry, if I had known—

PERSOME. Sorry, and why, pray? If Monseigneur the Bishop chooses to sell his salt-cellars he may do so, I suppose. Go and wash your hands, they are disgracefully dirty.

MARIE. Yes, madam [*going towards R.*]

[*Enter the BISHOP, C.*]

BISHOP. Ah, how nice and warm it is in here! It is worth going out in the cold for the sake of the comfort of coming in. [*PERSOME has hastened to help him off with his coat, etc. MARIE has dropped a deep curtsy.*] Thank you, dear [*looking at her*]. Why, what is the matter? You have been crying. Has Marie been troublesome, eh? [*Shaking his finger at her*] Ah!

PERSOME. No, it wasn't Marie—but, but—

BISHOP. Well, well, you shall tell me presently. Marie, my child, run home now, your mother is better, I have prayed with her, and the doctor has been. Run home! [*MARIE putting on cloak and going*] And, Marie, let yourself in quietly in case your mother is asleep.

MARIE. Oh, thanks, thanks, monseigneur.

[*She goes to door C., as it opens the snow drives in,*

BISHOP. Here, Marie, take my comforter, it will keep you warm. It is very cold to-night.

MARIE. Oh, no, monseigneur [*shamefacedly*]!

PERSOME. What nonsense, brother, she is young, she won't hurt.

BISHOP. Ah, Persome, you have not been out, you don't know how cold it has become. Here, Marie, let me put it on for you. [*Does so.*] There! Run along, little one.

[*Exit MARIE, C.*]

PERSOME. Brother, I have no patience with you. There, sit down and take your soup, it has been waiting ever so long. And if it is spoilt it serves you right.

BISHOP. It smells delicious.

PERSOME. I'm sure Marie's mother is not so ill that you need have stayed out on such a night as this. I believe those people *pretend* to be ill just to have the Bishop call on them. They have no thought of the Bishop!

BISHOP. It is kind of them to want to see me.

PERSOME. Well for my part I believe that charity begins at home.

BISHOP. And so you make me this delicious soup. You are very good to me, sister.

PERSOME. Good to you, yes! I should think so. I should like to know where you would be without me to look after you. The dupe of every idle scamp or lying old woman in the parish.

BISHOP. If people lie to me they are poorer, not I.

PERSOME. But it is ridiculous, you will soon have nothing left. You give away everything, everything!!!

BISHOP. My dear, there is so much suffering in the world, and I can do so little [*sighs*], so very little.

PERSOME. Suffering, yes, but you never think of the suffering you cause to those who love you best, the suffering you cause to me.

BISHOP [*rising*]. You, sister dear? Have I hurt you? Ah, I remember you had been crying. Was it my fault? I didn't mean to hurt you. I am sorry.

PERSOME. Sorry. Yes. Sorry won't mend it. Humph! Oh, do go on eating your soup before it gets cold.

BISHOP. Very well, dear. [*Sits*] But tell me—

PERSOME. You are like a child, I can't trust you out of my sight. No sooner is my back turned than you get that little minx Marie to sell the silver salt-cellars.

BISHOP. Ah, yes, the salt-cellars. It is a pity. You, you were proud of them?

PERSOME. Proud of them, why they have been in our family for years.

BISHOP. Yes, it is a pity, they were beautiful, but still, dear, one can eat salt out of china just as well.

PERSOME. Yes, or meat off the floor, I suppose. Oh, it's coming to that. And as for that old wretch Mere Gringoire, I wonder she had the audacity to send here again. The last time I saw her I gave her such a talking to that it ought to have had some effect.

BISHOP. Yes! I offered to take her in here for a day or two, but she seemed to think it might distress you.

PERSOME. Distress me !!!

BISHOP. And the bailiff, who is a very just man, would not wait longer for the rent, so—so—you see I *had* to pay it.

PERSOME. *You had to pay it. [Gesture of comic despair.*

BISHOP. Yes, and you see I had no money so I had to dispose of the salt-cellar. It is fortunate I had them, wasn't it? *[Smiling]* But I'm sorry I have grieved you.

PERSOME. Oh, go on! go on! you are incorrigible. You'll sell your candlesticks next.

BISHOP *[with real concern]*. No, no, sister, not my candlesticks.

PERSOME. Oh! Why not? They would pay somebody's rent, I suppose.

BISHOP. Ah, you are good, sister, to think of that, but, but I don't want to sell them. You see, dear, my mother gave them to me on—on her deathbed just after you were born, and—and she asked me to keep them in remembrance of her, so I would like to keep them, but perhaps it is a sin to set such store by them?

PERSOME. Brother, brother, you will break my heart *[with tears in her voice]*. There! don't say anything more. Kiss me and give me your blessing. I'm going to bed. *[They kiss.]*

[BISHOP making sign of the Cross and murmuring blessing.]

[PERSOME locks cupboard door and turns to go.]

PERSOME. Don't sit up too long and tire your eyes.

BISHOP. No, dear! Good night! *(PERSOME exits R.)*

BISHOP *[comes to table and opens a book, then looks up at the candlesticks]*. They would pay somebody's rent. It was kind of her to think of that.

[He stirs the fire, trims the lamp, arranges some books and papers, sits down, is restless, shivers slightly,

clock outside strikes twelve, and he settles to read. Music during this. Enter the CONVICT stealthily, he has a long knife and seizes the BISHOP from behind.

CONVICT. If you call out you are a dead man!

BISHOP. But, my friend, as you see, I am reading. Why should I call out? Can I help you in any way?

CONVICT [*hoarsely*]. I want food. I'm starving. I haven't eaten anything for three days. Give me food quickly, quickly, curse you.

BISHOP [*eagerly*]. But certainly, my son, you shall have food. I will ask my sister for the keys of the cupboard. [*Rising.*

CONVICT. Sit down !!! [*The BISHOP sits, smiling.*] None of that, my friend! I'm too old a bird to be caught with chaff. You would ask your sister for the keys, would you? A likely story! You would rouse the house too. Eh? Ha! ha! A good joke truly. Come, where is the food? I want no keys. I have a wolf inside me tearing at my entrails, tearing me; quick, tell me where the food is.

BISHOP [*aside*]. I wish Persome would not lock the cupboard. [*Aloud*] Come, my friend, you have nothing to fear. My sister and I are alone here.

CONVICT. How do I know that?

BISHOP. Why I have just told you.

[CONVICT looks long at the BISHOP.]

CONVICT. Humph! I'll risk it. [BISHOP, going to door R.] But mind! Play me false and as sure as there are devils in hell I'll drive my knife through your heart. I have nothing to lose.

BISHOP. You have your soul to lose, my son, it is

of more value than my heart. [*At door R. calling*]
Persome! Persome!

[*The CONVICT stands behind him with his knife ready.*

PERSOME [*within*]. Yes, brother.

BISHOP. Here is a poor traveller who is hungry. If you are not undressed will you come and open the cupboard and I will give him some supper.

PERSOME [*within*]. What, at this time of night? A pretty business truly. Are we to have no sleep now, but to be at the beck and call of every ne'er-do-well who happens to pass?

BISHOP. But, Persome, the traveller is hungry.

PERSOME. Oh, very well, I am coming. [PERSOME enters R. Sees the knife in the CONVICT's hand.] [*Frightened*]
Brother, what is he doing with that knife?

BISHOP. The knife, oh, well, you see, dear, perhaps he may have thought I—I had sold ours. [*Laughs gently.*

PERSOME. Brother, I am frightened. He glares at us like a wild beast [*aside to him*].

CONVICT. Hurry, I tell you. Give me food or I'll stick my knife in you both and help myself.

BISHOP. Give me the keys, Persome, [*she gives them to him*] and now, dear, you may go to bed.

[PERSOME going. *The CONVICT springs in front of her.*

CONVICT. Stop! Neither of you leave this room till I do. [*She looks at the BISHOP.*

BISHOP. Persome, will you favour this gentleman with your company at supper? He evidently desires it.

PERSOME. Very well, brother.

[*She sits down at table staring at the two.*

BISHOP. Here is some cold pie and a bottle of wine and some bread.

CONVICT. Put them on the table, and stand below it so that I can see you.

[BISHOP *does so and opens drawer in table, taking out knife and fork, looking at the knife in CONVICT's hand.*

CONVICT. My knife is sharp. [*He runs his finger along the edge and looks at them meaningly.*] And as for forks [*taking it up*] faugh! steel. [*He throws it away.*] We don't use forks in prison.

PERSOME. Prison?

CONVICT [*cutting off an enormous slice, which he tears with his fingers like an animal, then starts*]. What was that? [*He looks at the door.*] Why the devil do you leave the window unshuttered and the door unbarred so that anyone can come in [*shutting them*]?

BISHOP. That is why they are left open.

CONVICT. Well, they are shut now!

BISHOP [*sighs*]. For the first time in thirty years.

[CONVICT *eats voraciously and throws a bone on the floor.*

PERSOME. Oh, my nice clean floor!

[BISHOP *picks up the bone and puts it on plate.*

CONVICT. You're not afraid of thieves?

BISHOP. I am sorry for them.

CONVICT. Sorry for them. Ha! ha! ha! [*Drinks from bottle.*] That's a good one. Sorry for them. Ha! ha! ha! [*Drinks.*] [*Suddenly*] What the devil are you?

BISHOP. I am a bishop.

CONVICT. Ha! ha! ha! A bishop. Holy Virgin, a bishop. Well I'm damned!

BISHOP. I hope you may escape that, my son. Persome, you may leave us, this gentleman will excuse you.

PERSOME. Leave you with—

BISHOP. Please! My friend and I can talk more—freely then.

[By this time, owing to his starving condition, the wine has affected the CONVICT.]

CONVICT. What's that? Leave us. Yes, yes, leave us. Good night. I want to talk to the Bishop. The Bishop. Ha! ha! *[Laughs as he drinks and coughs.]*

BISHOP. Good night, Persome.

[He holds the door open and she goes out R., holding in her skirts as she passes the CONVICT.]

CONVICT *[chuckling to himself]*. The Bishop. Ha! ha! Well I'm—*[Suddenly very loudly]* D'you know what I am?

BISHOP. I think one who has suffered much.

CONVICT. Suffered *[puzzled]*, suffered? My God, yes. *[Drinks.]* But that's a long time ago. Ha! ha! That was when I was a man, now I'm not a man; now I'm a number: number 15729, and I've lived in hell for ten years.

BISHOP. Tell me about it—about hell.

CONVICT. What? *[Suspiciously]* Do you want to tell the police—to set them on my track?

BISHOP. No! I will not tell the police.

CONVICT *[looks at him earnestly]*. I believe you *[scratching his head]*, but damn me if I know why.

BISHOP *[laying his hand on the CONVICT's arm]*. Tell me about the time—the time before you went to—hell.

CONVICT. It's so long ago I forgot, but I had a little cottage, there were vines growing on it *[dreamily]*, they looked pretty with the evening sun on them

and, and—there was a woman—she was [*thinking hard*]*—she must have been my wife—yes. [Suddenly and very rapidly]* Yes, I remember! she was ill, we had no food, I could get no work, it was a bad year, and my wife, my Jeanette, was ill, dying, [*pause*] so I stole to buy her food. [*Long pause. The BISHOP gently pats his hand.*] They caught me. I pleaded to them, I told them why I stole, but they laughed at me, and I was sentenced to ten years in the prison hulks, [*pause*] ten years in hell. The night I was sentenced the gaoler told me—told me Jeanette was dead. [*Sobs, with fury*] Ah, damn them, damn them. God curse them all. [*He sinks on the table sobbing.*

BISHOP. Now tell me about the prison-ship, about hell.

CONVICT. Tell you about it? Look here, I was a man once, I'm a beast now, and they made me what I am. They chained me up like a wild animal, they lashed me like a hound. I fed on filth, I was covered with vermin, I slept on boards and I complained. Then they lashed me again. For ten years, ten years. Oh God! They took away my name, they took away my soul, and they gave me a devil in its place. But one day they were careless, one day they forgot to chain up their wild beast, and he escaped. He was free. That was six weeks ago. I was free, free to starve.

BISHOP. To starve?

CONVICT. Yes, to starve. They feed you in hell, but when you escape from it you starve. They were hunting me everywhere and I had no passport, no name. So I stole again, I stole these rags, I stole my

food daily, I slept in the woods, in barns, anywhere. I dare not ask for work, I dare not go into a town to beg, so I stole, and they have made me what I am, they have made me a thief, God curse them all.

[Empties the bottle and throws it into the fireplace R., smashing it.]

BISHOP. My son, you have suffered much, but there is hope for all.

CONVICT. Hope! Hope! Ha! ha! ha! *[Laughs wildly.]*

BISHOP. You have walked far, you are tired. Lie down and sleep on the couch there, I will get you some coverings.

CONVICT. And if anyone comes?

BISHOP. No one will come, but if they do, are you not my friend?

CONVICT. Your friend *[puzzled]*?

BISHOP. They will not molest the Bishop's friend.

CONVICT. The Bishop's friend!

[Scratching his head, utterly puzzled.]

BISHOP. I will get the coverings. *[Exit L.]*

CONVICT *[looks after him, scratches his head]*. The Bishop's friend! *[He goes to fire to warm himself and notices the candlesticks. He looks round to see if he is alone, and takes them down, weighing them.]* Silver, by God, and heavy. What a prize!

[He hears the BISHOP coming, and in his haste drops one candlestick on the table.]

[Enter the BISHOP.]

BISHOP *[sees what is going on, but goes to the settle up L. with coverings]*. Ah, you are admiring my candlesticks. I am proud of them. They were a gift from my mother. A little too handsome for this poor cottage

perhaps, but all I have to remind me of her. Your bed is ready. Will you lie down now?

CONVICT. Yes, yes, I'll lie down now. [*Puzzled*] Look here, why the devil are you—ki—kind to me. [*Suspiciously*] What do you want? Eh?

BISHOP. I want you to have a good sleep, my friend.

CONVICT. I believe you want to convert me; save my soul, don't you call it? Well it's no good, see? I don't want any damned religion and as for the Church, bah! I hate the Church.

BISHOP. That is a pity, my son, as the Church does not hate you.

CONVICT. You are going to try to convert me. Oh, ha! ha! that's a good idea. Ha! ha! ha! No, no, Monseigneur the Bishop. I don't want any of your Faith, Hope, and Charity, see? So anything you do for me you're doing to the devil, understand [*defiantly*]?

BISHOP. One must do a great deal for the devil, in order to do a little for God.

CONVICT [*angrily*]. I don't want any damned religion, I tell you.

BISHOP. Won't you lie down now, it is late?

CONVICT [*grumbling*]. Well all right, but I won't be preached at, I—I——[*On couch*] You're sure no one will come?

BISHOP. I don't think they will, but if they do—you yourself have locked the door.

CONVICT. Humph! I wonder if it's safe. [*He goes to the door and tries it, then turns and sees the BISHOP holding the covering, annoyed.*] Here! you go to bed. I'll cover myself. [*The BISHOP hesitates.*] Go on, I tell you.

BISHOP. Good night, my son. [*Exit*

[CONVICT *waits till he is off, then tries the BISHOP's door.*

CONVICT. No lock of course. Curse it. [*Looks round and sees the candlesticks again.*] Humph! I'll have another look at them. [*He takes them up and toys with them.*] Worth hundreds I'll warrant. If I had these turned into money they'd start me fair. Humph! The old boy's fond of them too, said his mother gave him them. His mother, yes. They didn't think of my mother when they sent me to hell. He was kind to me too—but what's a bishop for except to be kind to you? Here, cheer up, my hearty, you're getting soft. God! wouldn't my chain-mates laugh to see 15729 hesitating about collaring the plunder because he felt good? Good! Ha! ha! Oh my God! Good! Ha! ha! 15729 getting soft. That's a good one. Ha! ha! No, I'll take his candlesticks and go, if I stay here he'll preach at me in the morning and I'll get soft. Damn him and his preaching too. Here goes!

[*He takes the candlesticks, stows them in his coat, and cautiously exits L. C. As he does so the door slams.*

PERSOME [*without*]. Who's there? Who's there, I say? Am I to get no sleep to-night? Who's there, I say? [*Enter R. PERSOME.*] I'm sure I heard the door shut. [*Looking round*] No one here? [*Knocks at the BISHOP's door L. Sees the candlesticks have gone.*] The candlesticks, the candlesticks. They are gone. Brother, brother, come out. Fire, murder, thieves! [*Enter BISHOP, L.*

BISHOP. What is it, dear, what is it? What is the matter?

PERSOME. He has gone. The man with the hungry eyes has gone, and he has taken your candlesticks.

BISHOP. Not my candlesticks, sister, surely not those. [*He looks and sighs.*] Ah that is hard, very hard, I, I—He might have left me those. They were all I had. [*Almost breaking down.*]

PERSOME. Well, but go and inform the police. He can't have gone far. They will soon catch him, and you'll get the candlesticks back again. You don't deserve them, though, leaving them about with a man like that in the house.

BISHOP. You are right, Persome. It was my fault. I led him into temptation.

PERSOME. Oh, nonsense! Led him into temptation indeed! The man is a thief, a common scoundrelly thief. I knew it the moment I saw him. Go and inform the police or I will. [*Going, but he stops her.*]

BISHOP. And have him sent back to prison [*very softly*], sent back to hell! No, Persome. It is a just punishment for me; I set too great store by them. It was a sin. My punishment is just, but oh God, it is hard, it is very hard. [*He buries his head in his hands.*]

PERSOME. No, brother, you are wrong. If you won't tell the police I will. I will not stand by and see you robbed. I know you are my brother and my bishop and the best man in all France, but you are a fool, I tell you, a child, and I will not have your goodness abused. I shall go and inform the police [*going*].

BISHOP. Stop, Persome. The candlesticks were mine, they are *his* now. It is better so. He has more need of them than I. My mother would have wished it so had she been here.

PERSOME. But—

[*Great knocking without.*]

SERGEANT [*without*]. Monseigneur, monseigneur, we have something for you, may we enter?

BISHOP. Enter, my son.

[*Enter SERGEANT and three GENDARMES with CONVICT bound. The SERGEANT carries the candlesticks.*]

PERSOME. Ah so they have caught you, villain, have they?

SERGEANT. Yes, madam, we found this scoundrel slinking along the road, and as he wouldn't give any account of himself we arrested him on suspicion. Holy Virgin, isn't he strong and didn't he struggle? While we were securing him these candlesticks fell out of his pockets. [*PERSOME seizes them, goes to table, and brushes them with her apron lovingly.*] I remembered the candlesticks of Monseigneur the Bishop, so we brought him here that you might identify them and then we'll lock him up.

[*The BISHOP and the CONVICT have been looking at each other. The CONVICT with dogged defiance.*]

BISHOP. But, but I don't understand, this gentleman is my very good friend.

SERGEANT. Your *friend*, monseigneur!! Holy Virgin! Well!!!

BISHOP. Yes, my friend, he did me the honour to sup with me to-night and I—I have given him the candlesticks.

SERGEANT [*incredulously*]. You gave *him*, *him* your candlesticks? Holy Virgin!

BISHOP [*severely*]. Remember, my son, that she is holy.

SERGEANT [*saluting*]. Pardon, monseigneur.

BISHOP. And now I think you may let your prisoner go.

SERGEANT. But he won't show me his papers, he won't tell me who he is.

BISHOP. I have told you he is my friend.

SERGEANT. Yes, that's all very well, but—

BISHOP. He is your Bishop's friend, surely that is enough.

SERGEANT. Well, but—

BISHOP. Surely?

[*A pause. The SERGEANT and the BISHOP look at each other.*]

SERGEANT. I—I——Humph! [*To his men*] Loose the prisoner. [*They do so.*] Right about turn, quick march!

[*Exit SERGEANT and GENDARMES. A long pause.*]

CONVICT [*very slowly, as if in a dream*]. You told them you had given me the candlesticks, given me them. By God!

PERSOME [*shaking her fist at him and hugging the candlesticks to her breast*]. Oh, you scoundrel, you pitiful scoundrel, you come here and are fed, and warmed, and—and you thief; steal from your benefactor. Oh, you blackguard.

BISHOP. Persome, you are overwrought. Go to your room.

PERSOME. What, and leave you with him to be cheated again, perhaps murdered. No, I will not.

BISHOP [*with slight severity*]. Persome, leave us, I wish it.

[*She looks hard at him, then turns towards her door.*]

PERSOME. Well, if I must go at least I'll take the candlesticks with me.

BISHOP [*more severely*]. Persome, place the candlesticks on that table and leave us.

PERSOME [*defiantly*]. I will not!

BISHOP [*loudly and with great severity*]. I, your bishop, command it.

[PERSOME *does so with great reluctance and exits R.*

CONVICT [*shamefacedly*]. Monseigneur, I'm glad I didn't get away with them, curse me, I am. I'm glad.

BISHOP. Now won't you sleep here? See, your bed is ready.

CONVICT. No! [*Looking at the candlesticks*] No! no! I daren't, I daren't—besides I must go on, I must get to Paris, it is big, and I—I can be lost there, they won't find me there and I must travel at night, do you understand?

BISHOP. I see—you must travel by night.

CONVICT. I—I—didn't believe there was any good in the world—one doesn't when one has been in hell, but somehow I—I—know you're good and, and it's a queer thing to ask but—but could you, would you bless me before I go—I—I—think it would help me. I— [*Hangs his head very shamefacedly.*

[BISHOP *makes sign of the Cross and murmurs blessing.*

CONVICT [*tries to speak, but a sob almost chokes him*]. Good night. [*He hurries towards the door.*

BISHOP. Stay, my son, you have forgotten your property [*giving him the candlesticks*].

CONVICT. You mean me—you want me to take them?

BISHOP. Please, they may help you. [*The CONVICT takes the candlesticks in absolute amazement.*] And, my

son, there is a path through the woods at the back of this cottage which leads to Paris, it is a very lonely path, and I have noticed that my good friends the gendarmes do not like lonely paths at night. It is curious.

CONVICT. Ah, thanks, thanks, monseigneur. I—I—*[He sobs.]* Ah! I'm a fool, a child to cry, but somehow you have made me feel that—that it is just as if something had come into me—as if I were a man again and not a wild beast.

[The door at back is open, and the CONVICT is standing in it.]

BISHOP *[putting his hand on his shoulder]*. Always remember, my son, that this poor body is the Temple of the Living God.

CONVICT *[with great awe]*. The Temple of the Living God. I'll remember. *[Exit L. C.]*

[The BISHOP closes the door and goes quietly to the prie-dieu in the window R., he sinks on his knees, and bows his head in prayer.]

SLOW CURTAIN

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.*



WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

From AS YOU LIKE IT, ACT II, SCENE V

TO BLOSSOMS

ROBERT HERRICK

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.



ROBERT
HERRICK

What! were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight,
 And so to bid good night?
 'Twas pity Nature brought you forth
 Merely to show your worth
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'r so brave:
 And after they have shown their pride
 Like you awhile, they glide
 Into the grave.

From THE POETICAL WORKS

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT

(Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes)

THOMAS GRAY



THOMAS GRAY

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
 Where China's gayest art had dy'd
 The azure flowers, that blow;
 Demurest of the tabby kind,
 The pensive Selima reclin'd,
 Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
 The fair round face, the snowy beard,
 The velvet of her paws,
 Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
 Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
 She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gaz'd; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smil'd)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguil'd,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry watry God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
Nor cruel *Tom*, nor *Susan* heard.
A Fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceiv'd,
 Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,
 And be with caution bold.
 Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
 And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
 Nor all, that glisters, gold.

From THE POEMS OF GRAY AND COLLINS

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

ROBERT BURNS



ROBERT BURNS

Is there, for honest poverty,
 That hangs his head, and a' that?
 The coward-slave, we pass him by,
 We dare be poor for a' that!
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Our toils obscure, and a' that;
 The rank is but the guinea stamp;
 The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hoddin-gray, and a' that;
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A man's a man for a' that.
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that;
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that:

Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
 And gentle tale of love and languishment?
 Returning home at evening, with an ear
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
 He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
 E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
 That falls through the clear ether silently.

From THE POETICAL WORKS

THE CLOUD*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



P. B. SHELLEY

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

 I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

* Only the first stanza (twelve lines) and the last stanza (twelve lines) are to be read.

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine acery nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

From THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

LORD BYRON

I

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall:
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!



LORD BYRON

II

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

III

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.
'Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.'

IV

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

V

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright.
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
The morrow proved it true.

VI

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne !'

From THE POETICAL WORKS

THE SCHOLAR

ROBERT SOUTHEY

My days among the Dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
 I live in long-past years,
 Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
 Partake their hopes and fears,
 And from their lessons seek and find
 Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
 My place with them will be,
 And I with them shall travel on
 Through all Futurity;
 Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
 That will not perish in the dust.

From ENGLISH VERSE, VOLUME IV (THE WORLD'S CLASSICS, 311)

TO THE CUCKOO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



WILLIAM
WORDSWORTH

O Blithe New-comer! I have heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice.
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
 Thy twofold shout I hear;
 From hill to hill it seems to pass
 At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
 Of sunshine and of flowers,
 Thou bringest unto me a tale
 Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

From THE POETICAL WORKS

PRO PATRIA MORI

THOMAS MOORE

When he who adores thee has left but the name
Of his fault and his sorrows behind,
O! say wilt thou weep, when they darken the fame
Of a life that for thee was resigned?

Yes, weep, and however my foes may condemn,
 Thy tears shall efface their decree;
 For, Heaven can witness, though guilty to them,
 I have been but too faithful to thee.

With thee were the dreams of my earliest love,
 Every thought of my reason was thine:
 In my last humble prayer to the Spirit above
 Thy name shall be mingled with mine!
 O! blest are the lovers and friends who shall live
 The days of thy glory to see;
 But the next dearest blessing that Heaven can give
 Is the pride of thus dying for thee.

From ENGLISH VERSE, VOLUME IV (THE WORLD'S CLASSICS, 311)

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

ROBERT BROWNING



ROBERT BROWNING

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
 A mile or so away,
 On a little mound, Napoleon
 Stood on our storming-day;
 With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
 Legs wide, arms locked behind,
 As if to balance the prone brow
 Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused 'My plans
 'That soar, to earth may fall,
 'Let once my army-leader Lannes
 'Waver at yonder wall,'—

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

'Well,' cried he, 'Emperor, by God's grace
'We've got you Ratisbon!
'The Marshal's in the market-place,
'And you'll be there anon
'To see your flag-bird flap his vans
'Where I, to heart's desire,
'Perched him!' The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
'You're wounded!' 'Nay,' the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
'I'm killed, Sire!' And his chief beside
Smiling the boy fell dead.

From THE POETICAL WORKS

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

LORD TENNYSON

I



LORD
TENNYSON

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
 Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!

All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

From POETICAL WORKS AND PLAYS

REQUIEM

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

R. L. STEVENSON

This be the verse you grave for me:
*Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.*

From POEMS

✓ THE TRAIN

MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE

A green eye—and a red—in the dark,
Thunder—smoke—and a spark.

It is there—it is here—flashed by.
Whither will the wild thing fly?

It is rushing, tearing through the night,
Rending her gloom in its flight.

It shatters her silence with shrieks.
What is it the wild thing seeks?

Alas! for it hurries away
Them that are fain to stay.

Hurrah! for it carries home
Lovers and friends that roam.

From POEMS

SONG OF THE NIGHT AT DAYBREAK

ALICE MEYNELL

All my stars forsake me,
And the dawn-winds shake me.
Where shall I betake me?

Whither shall I run
Till the set of sun,
Till the day be done?

• To the mountain-mine,
To the boughs of the pine,
To the blind man's eyne,

To a brow that is
Bowed upon the knees,
Sick with memories?



ALICE MEYNELL

From POEMS

WEATHERS

THOMAS HARDY



THOMAS HARDY

I

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I.

When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly:

And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at 'The Travellers' Rest',
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

II

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;

When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;

And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,

And meadow rivulets overflow,

And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,

And rooks in families homeward go,

And so do I.

From THE COLLECTED POEMS

I LOVE ALL BEAUTEIOUS THINGS

ROBERT BRIDGES



ROBERT BRIDGES

I love all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them.

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Altho' tomorrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking.

From THE POETICAL WORKS

THE RAIN

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

I hear leaves drinking Rain;
I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath
Drop after drop;
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,
After this Rain shall stop,
A wondrous Light will fill
Each dark, round drop;
I hope the Sun shines bright:
'Twill be a lovely sight.

From POEMS

HEROES

E. D. PROCTOR

Mother Earth! Are the heroes dead?
Do they thrill the soul of the years no more?
Are the gleaming snows and the poppies red
All that is left of the brave of yore?

Are there none to fight as Theseus fought
Far in the young world's misty dawn?
Or to teach as the grey-haired Nestor taught?
Mother Earth! are the heroes gone?

Gone? In a grander form they rise;
Dead? We may clasp their hands in ours;
And catch the light of their clearer eyes,
And wreath their brows with immortal flowers.
Wherever a noble deed is done
'Tis the pulse of a hero's heart is stirred;
Wherever Right has a triumph won,
There are the heroes' voices heard.

I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN

ANONYMOUS

I shall not pass through this world but once;
Any good thing, therefore, that I can do,
Or any kindness that I can show
To any human being,
Let me do it now!
Let me not defer it
Or neglect it;
For I shall not pass
This way again.

NOTES

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

A parable is an allegorical story with some high moral or religious lesson. The lesson is explained side by side with the story, which narrates something that might actually have occurred.

'Parable' is originally from Greek, *parabole*, a placing side by side, and thus a placing or comparison of a moral lesson side by side with a story from actual life.

Christ gave his teachings in parables. These parables were simple stories with a background familiar to the common people.

The parables occur in the New Testament, one of the two great divisions of the Holy Bible.

The New Testament is mainly a record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The other division—the Old Testament—is the record of the history and the religious literature of the Jews.

The teachings of Christ were broadcast by his disciples as 'Good News' or 'Happy Message' to men. So the teachings came to be called the 'Gospels' (from Old English *godspel*, *spel* meaning 'news') of the New Testament—the Gospels according to St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John—the four great missionaries of early Christianity.

The parable in the text has been taken from the Gospel according to St Luke as it appears in the 'Authorized Version', the popular name of the translation of the Holy Bible, made by a body of 47 scholars appointed by King James I of England, and published in 1611.

The language of the Authorized Version has a musical charm and majesty of its own. But it is archaic here and there, as it dates back to the early part of the seventeenth century.

Occasion of the Parable of the Good Samaritan

A certain Jewish lawyer, wanting to test Christ, asked him how he might live a purely spiritual life. Christ put a counter-question. 'What does the law tell you in the matter?' The lawyer's reply was, 'The law tells everybody to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength and with all his mind, and to love his neighbour as himself.' Christ then asked the lawyer to act according to the law. Then came the lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour?' In reply, Christ told the story of The Good Samaritan.

The Jews and the Samaritans

The Jews believed in one God—Jehovah. They hated idol-worship. The Samaritans, the inhabitants of Samaria, a province and also a city of Palestine, 35 miles north of Jerusalem, were known to be practising idolatry. An alliance with the Jews was turned down and in course of time, the two tribes looked upon each other as bitter enemies. The whole parable illustrates the importance of doing good to our neighbours even beyond what is usually expected of us.

PAGE 1. *And*: this gives an idea of something having gone before. The frequent use of this conjunction is also a sort of literary trick employed in simple narratives in Old English.

answering: replying to the question put by the Jewish lawyer.

Jerusalem: an important city in Palestine where Jesus was put to death (on the Cross) and buried.

Jericho: a city in Palestine, situated in the valley of the Jordan. Jericho is nearly 4,000 feet lower than Jerusalem and the distance between them is twenty miles. The road connecting the two cities, full of caves and gorges, was in those days infested with robbers.

thieves, which . . .: 'which' stands for 'who', as in 'Our Father *which* art in Heaven'. This is an archaic use, commonly found in the Authorized Version of the Bible in particular, and in English writing of that period in general.

priest: Christ mentions a priest to show that one does not become a really good man merely by performing religious rites.

Levite: one of the caste or family of Levi who acted as assistants to the priests in temple worship.

oil and wine: in the Old Testament 'oil' sometimes means 'ointment'. Here 'oil and wine' means an ointment prepared with wine.

two pence: 'pence', the collective plural of 'penny', here stands for the Roman silver coin 'denarius'. In English monetary reckoning, denarius stands for penny. Hence the abbreviation 'd' for a penny or pennies. In the lifetime of Jesus, the Jews were ruled by the Romans.

thou: refers to the Jewish lawyer.

was neighbour unto: showed neighbourly love to.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-64), an American novelist and one of the makers of American prose literature, was born at Salem, Massachusetts. He was born at a time when the American people were laying the foundation of their great history. He wrote stories and novels, of which *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* are the best known. He was appointed American Consul at Liverpool and recorded his impressions of England in *Our Old Home*, the last of his books published during his lifetime.

PAGE 2. *Sir Isaac Newton* (1642-1727) was the great English mathematician and scientist who discovered

the law of gravitation while, it is said, he was idly watching the fall of an apple from a tree in his garden. For the twenty-four years from 1703 till his death, Newton was president of the Royal Society.

Christmas Day: 25 December, the day of the birth of Jesus Christ. The year of Newton's birth is remarkable, being the year when the Civil War broke out in England and when the famous astronomer Galileo died.

Woolsthorpe: in Lincolnshire; 'thorpe' in Old English was the word for 'village'.

grandmother: the mother of Mrs Newton, Mrs Ayscough.

ingenuity: skill, power of ready invention.

PAGE 3. *water-clock*: a device for measuring time by the flow of water through a narrow aperture.

sundial: an instrument for showing the time of day by the position of the shadow cast by a pointer on a dial or diagram, with marks for the different hours and minutes. A visit to the Hooghly Imambara would show what a sundial looks like.

Sundials give the solar time only, which differs slightly from the clock-time.

PAGE 4. *philosophy*: here used in the sense of natural science, or the study of principles that explain facts and events.

windmill: a mill worked by a large wheel, made to move by the sails, which catch the wind.

hopper: a wooden trough or funnel, through which grain passes into a mill.

PAGE 5. *deficiency*: want; the thing missing.

Lemuel Gulliver: the hero of the famous story-book *Gulliver's Travels*, written by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745).

island of Lilliput: one of the many strange countries supposed to have been visited by the imaginary Captain

Gulliver in the course of his travels. The island has been described as inhabited by men and women who were only a few inches tall, but behaved like normal human beings.

PAGE 6. *two-legged millers*: i.e. human millers and not the 'mouse-miller' with four legs.

reverential curiosity: curiosity or desire to know mixed with deep respect for the Creator or the Author of the wonderful order and movement of the stars. Newton believed that God had given the initial impulse for the movement of the heavenly bodies.

presentiment: previous expectation of coming event. The scientist or seeker after truth in Newton grew along with his years. He had a faith in his own powers even in those early years.

PAGE 7. *nature of light*: what light really is.

Newton's theory of light is known as the *corpuscular* theory or *emission* theory. This theory was later on superseded by the *wave* theory of Christian Huygens. But modern scientists are again finding valuable clues in Newton's theory of light.

the story of an apple's falling: the story is told by the French writer Voltaire in one of his books.

gravitation: the force of attraction that all particles or bodies exert upon one another.

the force of gravitation: according to the universal law of gravitation, all material bodies attract one another but the force of attraction increases with their masses and decreases as the distance between them increases. The earth and the apple attract each other. The apple falls to the earth, because its mass is so much smaller.

the mechanism of the universe: the working of the universe as a machine; the regular order in the movement of the heavenly bodies that keep rolling in space in their fixed orbits.

PAGE 8. *curious*: strangely shaped.

PAGE 9. *letters of light formed by the stars*: Newton lived among the stars, as it were, his thoughts being constantly with them. So the stars should form his name in letters of light that will never perish.

CROSSING THE DESERT

ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE, the noted English historian of the Crimean War, was born in 1809. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1837, but retired in 1856 to devote himself to literature and politics. He had already published in 1844 *Eothen* ('From the East'), a work on Eastern travel which has remained one of the most popular English travel books. He entered Parliament in 1857 and in 1868 was again elected, but was unseated on petition. He died in 1891.

'Crossing the Desert' is taken from *Eothen*. In company with Lord Pollington, he went overland as far as Smyrna. From Smyrna he continued his journey accompanied only by an attendant, Mysseri, to Cyprus and Syria and thence through the desert to Egypt: thence, retracing his steps to Syria, he crossed by sea to Satalieh whence he finally took ship for home. In *Eothen* Kinglake gives a charming account of this journey. The book takes a high place among the Victorian classics.

Gaza, which was the starting-point of the author's journey, is a port in the south-west of Palestine on the borders of the desert which separates Palestine from Egypt. He covered the distance from Gaza to Cairo in ten days.

PAGE 9. *in the interior of*: inside.

point: precise place.

to make for: to proceed towards.

you have . . . resting place: in the desert, with its stretch of endless sands, there cannot be any particular place where one can go to spend the night.

yield: produce.

stunted: dwarfish, undersized.

fail: cease.

broad: extensive, wide.

reared: constructed.

newly constructed: recently formed by the action of the wind.

hills: hills of sand piled up by the wind. The formation of sand hills or desert dunes is due to the wind.

dug out: hollowed out.

samely: monotonous, unvarying. There is sand everywhere. The region all around presents an unbroken scene of sameness which so tires the eye that one turns towards the sky for a change.

taskmaster: one who imposes a task. The sun is the traveller's taskmaster because it sets the day's task for him. As soon as it rises, it lets the traveller know that the whole day's toil awaits him.

strike: fold up.

toil: labour.

veiled: covered with a silk veil as protection against the sun and dust.

shrouded: covered with a shroud; veiled.

and dare . . . glory: as the day advances, the sun shines in all its brilliant glory and it is impossible to look at it on account of its dazzling brightness.

strides: moves majestically; to 'stride' is to walk with long steps.

PAGE 10. *his flaming sword:* the scorching rays of the sun, which seem to pierce the skin like a sword.

moan: groan.

glows: burns with heat.

the glare of the outer light: the dazzling sunlight outside the veil.

labours on: drags on.

conquering: victorious.

by and by: before long.

descending: declining.

compassed: traversed; moved round.

lank: long; because the sun is declining.

and now softly . . .: the traveller is proceeding southward. The west is to his right and the east to his left. The sun, which is becoming less and less hot as the day declines, now falls on his right arm gently, and his long shadow is thrown to his left, i.e. towards the east. It seems to be projected towards Persia in the east.

for his power . . .: hitherto he could only feel the power of the flaming sun; but now that it is evening the sun has lost its power, and its beauty becomes manifest. Its power lies hidden in its beauty.

the redness of roses: Kinglake here speaks of the rays of the setting sun, tinged with a rosy hue.

wavy: undulating, wave-like; the clouds float on the sky like waves rolling on the sea.

comes blushing . . .: the cloud that disappeared in the morning is seen once again in the evening sky, tinged with the red rays of the setting sun. The rosy-tinted cloud of the evening sky approaches the sun bashfully, like a blushing maiden, and clings to his side.

blushing: suffused with red. The reference is to the rosy-tinted clouds in the evening sky.

clings to: adheres to; attaches itself to.

The world . . . your own: you have all the world to yourself.

dispute: question.

gurgling: bubbling.

alighted: got down.

unloaded: relieved of their burdens.

browse: feed on, crop.

PAGE 11. *kindling*: lighting.

was doing: was being done.

print: impression, mark.

apart: away.

Apart . . . Desert: away from his companions, who were shouting cheerfully, and left to himself, he could have a better idea of the loneliness of the desert; he walked away from his shouting companions so that he might have a better appreciation of the solitariness of the desert.

softening: mellowing.

of a softening kind: of such a nature as to make a man softer.

exultation: lively joy.

self-sufficiency: ability to gratify one's own desires without external aid; an overweening confidence in one's own abilities.

with a sort of . . .: Kinglake here says that the fact that he could stand all alone in the wide desert filled him with a lively joy. He took pride in his ability to do so. It was like the joy and the pride that a child feels when he succeeds in doing something by himself.

a short-lived pride . . .: the pride that Kinglake felt did not last long, for he had to return soon to his companions.

tethered: bound.

links: connects.

his kind: fellow human beings.

he still remains . . .: wherever he may happen to be, man cannot cut off the ties that bind him to his fellow human beings.

these solitudes: these lonely places.

Mysseri: his attendant.

rattling: clattering. To rattle is to cause to make a series of short, sharp, harsh sounds.

humming: singing.

sat humming away . . .: the reference is to the subdued hissing sound that came from the kettle as the water began to boil. The simmering of the old, odd-looking kettle was like the tune hummed by an old maid. The subdued hissing sound that came from it was the same here as in England. It reminded Kinglake of his country and it seemed to him as if it were singing old songs about England.

prim: neat.

skirts: borders, rims.

listed: liked, chose.

sweep: move with force and swiftness.

and make way . . . Englishman: Kinglake here says that the wind was deflected from its course by the heap of sand round the skirts of the tent. It could not blow straight into the tent but had to change its course out of respect for an Englishman. Kinglake humorously says that the Englishman considers himself a superior being, and everybody makes way for him. The wind was no exception. It turned aside to make way for Kinglake, an Englishman.

there were heaps of luxuries . . .: Kinglake humorously says that, though his was only a desert camp, it could boast of all the comforts of a luxury camp, having within its small space, no bigger than that of a hearth-rug, such amenities as dining-rooms, libraries, bedrooms, dressing-rooms and oratories—all huddled together.

PAGE 12. *oratory*: a place for private worship; a small chapel.

crowded: huddled together.

flood: stream.

a flood of life: swarms of insects. Attracted by the light of the taper, swarms of moths rushed into the tent.

monsters of moths: moths of huge size.

thronged: crowded.

extinguished: put out.

martyrdom: the sufferings and death of a martyr. A martyr is one who undergoes death or suffering for a cause. Some of the moths burned themselves as they rushed through the fire of the candle and almost put it out. Kinglake humorously says that they died the death of martyrs.

failed . . . martyrdom: failed to earn the honour of dying like martyrs.

despondently: dejectedly. The moths were dejected because they could not attain martyrdom.

fragrant: having a good smell.

form: class.

the butter . . . starving Ireland: the butter that Kinglake ate in the desert had come from far-off Ireland whose people suffered from extreme poverty and lack of food.

I feasted . . .: the meal consisted of fragrant tea and big pieces of hot toast and butter—what more could one expect in a desert? It was a right royal feast and Kinglake ate like a king and with as great a relish as a schoolboy.

sullen: gloomy; of dismal aspect.

loath: unwilling.

glowed: pulsed, vibrated. The little spot of ground had for a short time vibrated with life and activity.

The little spot had suddenly sprung to life. It had become lively with the joy of a human home. Kinglake was unwilling to see it swallowed up again by the cheerlessness of the desert.

speck: a small spot.

impressed: imprinted.

PAGE 13. *shivered*: trembled, shook.

genial: cheerful.

encroaching: trespassing.

off: gone.

instant: instantly.

Genius: (here) spirit.

stalked in: walked in.

the Genius of the Desert . . . : the spirit of the desert had been temporarily ousted from the place by an Englishman (Kinglake) who trespassed on it. He was guilty of an unwarranted intrusion. But the spirit was biding its time, and as soon as Kinglake left the place, it walked in and re-occupied it. A human dwelling had made it look cheerful for a time. But as soon as Kinglake was off, the spot became the cheerless, arid desert that it had been before.

NATURE AND SCIENCE

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825-95) exercised his influence on English thought by his addresses and writings on philosophical and religious subjects. He was a powerful supporter of some of the theories of Charles Darwin. He carried on a celebrated controversy with Gladstone, the famous English Prime Minister. Among his works may be mentioned his *Science Primer* (for many years a text-book for the Entrance Examination of Calcutta University), *Man's Place in Nature*, *The Physical Basis of Life, Science and Morals*, *Collected Essays* and *Scientific Memoirs*. Huxley described his own philosophical attitude by the term 'agnostic'. This means that he held the belief that phenomena which are not material cannot be either proved or disproved. His grandson Julian is a well-known biologist and a younger grandson, Aldous, is a well-known novelist and poet.

The piece 'Nature and Science' has been taken from Huxley's *Collected Essays*. In his characteristic style, Huxley here sets forth the role of Science in explaining how things occur in Nature.

PAGE 13. *senses*: such as sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

shingly: covered with small, loose stones or water-worn pebbles.

PAGE 14. *in the long run*: ultimately, if we go to the very root of things.

glassy calm: glass-like smoothness, from the sea being still and motionless.

PAGE 15. *drought* (pronounced drowt, 'gh' being silent): failure of rain.

horizon: line at which earth and sky appear to meet.

fixity in the relation of cause and effect: causes and effects are related in a way which never changes, the same causes ever giving rise to the same effects.

PAGE 16. *are only aliases of ignorance*: are but another name for ignorance; are really due to our ignorance, though we give them the name of 'chance' or 'accidents'.

alias: a Latin word, meaning 'at another time', 'otherwise', adopted in English chiefly in the latter sense; it means, as a noun, 'another name' (also, in some contexts, 'assumed name').

THE HAPPY PRINCE

OSCAR FINGAL O'FLAHERTIE WILLS WILDE (1856-1900), born at Dublin and educated at Oxford, became celebrated as the founder of an aesthetic cult, 'Art for Art's sake'.

Playwright, writer of prose and poet, Wilde has won for himself an abiding place in English literature by virtue of his sparkling wit, elegant style and brilliant satire. The best known of his plays are *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance* and *Salome*. His novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is in the form of a moral allegory and his *Intentions*

is a collection of critical studies. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *De Profundis* were written after he had been sentenced to imprisonment and are perhaps the most remarkable of his works. Wilde has come to be recognized as a master of English prose. Although heretical in his moral views, he wrote movingly of such virtues as love and sympathy for suffering humanity. This is powerfully evident in the piece 'The Happy Prince', originally published in his *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, a collection of fairy tales and allegories.

PAGE 16. *city*: an imaginary city.

the Happy Prince: the Prince who had been happy while he lived, but was unhappy when, after death, he witnessed the sufferings of his people, so long kept a secret from him. As told in the story, the Prince became happy, in the true sense, when he gave up all that he had to relieve the poor and helpless in the city.

weathercock: a device made of light metal, sometimes in the shape of a cock, placed on the roof of a house or any high place to show which way the wind is blowing. (The word is now also used as a symbol of fickleness and inconstancy.)

who wished . . . tastes: a satirical touch. A beautiful and dignified golden statue, adorned with sapphires and a large ruby, is compared with a weathercock with nothing of beauty about it. That shows the 'artistic tastes' of the Councillor!

'*He looks . . . angel*': the Charity Children truly appreciated the beauty of the statue.

Charity Children: children brought up in charitable institutions.

pinafors: coverings of washable material worn by children over the dress, to protect it from being soiled.

'*you have never seen one*': the Mathematical Master is a man of cold logic, disapproving even of children's dreams.

PAGE 17. *swallow*: a migratory bird with long wings, known for its swift, graceful flight. It is seen in spring-time in Europe. In autumn it migrates to North Africa, where it finds a warmer climate. (cf. 'One swallow does not make a summer.')

reed: a kind of tall grass with a long, straight stalk, growing in marshy places, and along banks of streams, rivers or lakes.

curtseys: bows (properly, a bow or a movement of respect or allegiance, made by women by the bending of the knees and the lowering of the body).

domestic: attached to the home.

PAGE 18. *trifling*: behaving frivolously, treating without seriousness, playing or dallying.

to the Pyramids: to the land of the Pyramids, i.e. to Egypt.

chimney-pot: cylindrical pipe at the top of a chimney (put there to increase the draught and to prevent smoking).

PAGE 19. *Palace of Sans-Souci*: Sans Souci was the name given by Frederick the Great to the palace he built at Potsdam near Berlin in Germany. 'Sans souci', a French expression, means 'care-free' (the same as the Sanskrit or Bengali expression *Ashoka*), *sans*, 'without', *souci*, 'care, worry' (cf. Sanskrit verb *shuch*, 'to grieve').

seamstress: a woman who sews clothes.

passion-flowers: flowers or shrubs, supposed to look like the crown of thorns which Jesus was made to wear on the Cross; they grow on climbing vines.

maids-of-honour: ladies attending upon one of high birth.

'*I am . . . in Egypt*': 'My friends are expecting my arrival in Egypt.'

PAGE 20. *painted coffin*: the Swallow speaks of a tomb like that of a Pharaoh of Egypt.

embalmed: the Egyptian kings and queens were buried

in painted and decorated coffins after their bodies had been preserved from decay with balsams and spices.

Round his neck . . .: the Swallow is speaking of the mummy or the preserved dead body of the king.

jade: a semi-precious stone, usually of a light green colour, highly prized for carvings and jewelry. Old Chinese ornamental jades are very valuable.

PAGE 21. *'I hope my dress . . .'*: the girl is most anxious about her dress and seems to care very little for the poetic speech of her lover.

the Ghetto (pronounced getto, the 'h' in 'ghe' being always silent): originally the quarter in Italian cities, particularly Venice, to which Jews were confined; hence a Jewish quarter in any city.

thimble: a metal cover for the finger, used in sewing.

phenomenon: an event or appearance, something that impresses the observer as extraordinary (it also applies to a remarkable thing or person).

Ornithology: the science of birds.

full of so many words: a fling at the learned Professor.

PAGE 22. *a distinguished stranger*: the Swallow, seen with his long wings in that unusual period of the year, looked a distinguished stranger.

commissions: charges given to a person to perform.

cataract: waterfall. There are six numbered cataracts on the Nile, between Khartoum in Sudan and Cairo, as it rushes down from the Abyssinian hills and flows through Egypt into the Mediterranean Sea. The First Cataract is at Assuan, the famous dam; the Second Cataract is farther up the river.

river-horse: the hippopotamus or 'hippo', an African quadruped living in water.

bulrushes: large, strong rushes or reeds.

In the Bible, bulrush is Egyptian Papyrus, from which was prepared thin strips for writing on; it is from 'Papyrus' that 'paper' is derived.

granite (pronounced granit, the 'a' as in 'cat'): hard, crystalline rock.

Memnon: tradition described a colossal statue near Thebes in Lower Egypt as representing Memnon, though in reality it was of Amenhotep III. It gave forth a musical note when touched by the rays of the rising sun. This was later on explained as being due to the flow of currents of air, caused by the change of temperature, inside the fissures on the statue. In Greek legends, Memnon is King of Ethiopia or Abyssinia, son of Tithonus and Eos (Aurora), referred to in the *Odyssey* as the handsomest of mortals. In the post-Homeric legends he is said to have fought in the Trojan War in support of his uncle King Priam and to have been slain by Achilles.

beryls: semi-precious stones, usually green but also blue, white or yellow in colour.

garret: small room at the top of a house.

PAGE 24. *Baalbec*: town in south-west Syria dedicated to the worship of Baal, the Phœnician sun-god.

PAGE 25. *ibises* (pronounced aibisiz): stork-like birds found near lakes or marshy places in warm countries.

the Sphinx: in Egyptian antiquity, the Sphinx is a male creature with a human head and the body of a lion. It represented the god Horus. The most famous figure of the Sphinx is near the Great Pyramid at Gizeh in Egypt. In Greek mythology the Sphinx was a monster with the head and breasts of a woman, the body of a lion, and a human voice. It proposed a riddle to the passers-by near Thebes, killing those who failed to solve it. Oedipus solved it and the Sphinx, on hearing the answer, killed herself by dashing her head against a rock.

King of the Mountains of the Moon: an imaginary king of a region mistakenly supposed to be the source of the River Nile.

black as ebony: because he was a legendary African king. Ebony is a hard, black wood.

pygmies: refers to small-sized tribes, mentioned in ancient history as living in Ethiopia and India. The Pygmies (with capital P) are the dwarf races living in equatorial Africa. Men of a very small size of Negroid stock are found in the Andamans and in other parts of south-east Asia. The word is also spelt 'pigmy'.

There is no Mystery . . . Misery: suffering is the greatest of all mysteries because there has been as yet no answer to the question — Why should man suffer at all in God's good world?

PAGE 26. *icicles*: tapering ice-formations, sometimes looking very beautiful.

Death is the brother of Sleep: death also brings repose just as sleep does.

PAGE 27. *snapped*: burst.

birds are not to be allowed to die here: as if it rested with somebody that birds should die at prescribed places! A satirical touch, a fling at official stupidity.

PAGE 28. *So they threw it on a dust-heap*: those who judge by the exterior and have no insight into real worth or beauty thus, in their stupidity, cast away most precious things.

THE LOST STICK

EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS (1868-1938) was an essayist of remarkable charm. He was educated at London University. He took up journalism and was Assistant Editor of *Punch* for a number of years. He published, among numerous works, a standard life of Charles Lamb, editions of the works and letters of Charles and Mary Lamb and two pleasant anthologies.

Among the best of his discursive entertainments are *Over Bemerton's* and *Listener's Lure*. The charm of his essays lies in the treatment. They read like casual, intimate talk, the topics being insignificant. The style is lively with a natural freshness in spite of a studied finish.

'The Lost Stick' is taken from *Luck of the Year*.

PAGE 28. *voiceless*: silent, dumb.

A mere . . . of wood: a mere piece of dead wood without any voice, and so it cannot give vocal expression to its feelings.

whose one wish . . . with me: the lost stick wants to get back to its rightful owner. That is its only wish in life now, but unfortunately it is only a piece of dead wood without any voice and so it cannot give expression to its feelings in words. The author, however, is quite sure that it is always thinking of him.

malignity: a disposition to do harm, inflict suffering or cause distress; maliciousness.

theme: subject.

occupied. engaged.

James Payn: (1830-98) was Editor of *Chambers's Journal* from 1859 to 1874. From 1883 to 1896 he was Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. He published a volume of poems in 1853 and *Some Literary Recollections* in 1884. *The Backwater of Life* and other essays appeared posthumously in 1899. He was also the author of a large number of novels.

characteristic: typical.

James Payn . . . about it: James Payn may be regarded as typical of those humorous writers who have dealt with the subject of the malignity of inanimate objects.

stud: a two-headed button for use with two button-holes. A 'collar stud' is a long kind of stud going through four holes.

set off: start a person talking on a pet subject.

a dropped collar stud . . .: Payn thought that the suffering caused by the dropped collar stud was evidence of the ill will of inanimate objects.

concern: anxiety.

what fills me with concern: what worries me.

is their inanimacy: is the fact that they are inanimate and so cannot communicate their feelings.

powerlessness: helplessness.

bad qualities: like malignity.

PAGE 29. *warmth*: cordiality.

devotion: attachment, loyalty.

treachery: faithlessness, perfidy.

For things that have . . .: the author here says that watches and rings, though they are inanimate objects, come to acquire a certain personality on account of their close association with us. An intimate personal relationship grows between them and us as we use them. They become like warm and devoted friends. But the watches and rings that have just come out of the factory and have not yet come into our possession lack this warmth and devotedness because no personal relationship has yet developed. We should be guilty of faithlessness if we said that the relationship between us and the sticks and rings that we use is not warmer than that between us and those that we have not yet acquired.

a club stand: a stand (something on which anything may be placed for support) in a club.

had it a tongue: if it could speak.

in its dumb way: silently, because it is voiceless.

miscreant: an unscrupulous villain; vile wretch.

needs: wants.

We belong to each other: He is mine and I am his.

Madagascar: an island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa. It is a French colony. The stick was brought from Madagascar.

ferruled: supplied with a ferrule. A ferrule is a metal ring or cap strengthening the end of a stick.

Avenue: a wide street.

Avenue de l' Opera: the name of a Paris street. It ranks among the world's most impressive city streets.

Marseilles: second city of France and its first port.

Cannebiere: Rue Cannebière ('rope walk') the name of a street in Marseilles.

Corniche: the Corniche road east of Marseilles.

Chateau D' If: a small island in the Gulf of Lions to the west of Marseilles.

Aix: Aix-en-Provence, a town to the north of Marseilles. It commands the best route from the Lower Rhine to Nice. It is the birthplace of Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), the most influential artist of the late nineteenth century. He is claimed as a forerunner by almost all progressive movements in twentieth-century painting.

afield: away, abroad.

Port Said: a seaport of Egypt at the northern entrance of the Suez Canal.

Simon Arzt's: the name of a department store.

topee: the sola topee, a pith hat made from the *sola* plant.

becoming: properly befitting.

not a very becoming . . .: he did not look quite well in his topee. The author humorously adds that nobody ever does.

Aden: a seaport and territory in southernmost Arabia; a British settlement since 1839.

I helped . . . Aden: I helped to bear him up as he walked under the heat of Aden.

PAGE 30. *tip*: small money present; baksheesh.

repulsing: driving back.

alike: similar.

for they are all alike: they looked so alike that it was difficult to distinguish between them.

pack: a number or set of persons closely associated, group (used only derogatorily).

holding out: stretching out.

impudent: audacious.

merry: marked by gaiety and festivity.

'Merry Christmas': a form of greeting like 'Happy New Year'.

I was useful too . . .: his boat was surrounded by a group of black boys who wanted baksheesh from him because it was Christmas Day. When the same group of boys—or it might be that they were others for they looked so alike that it was difficult to distinguish between them—followed him and greeted him by crying 'Merry Christmas', audaciously stretching out their black hands for a tip, it was with my help (with the stick) that my master succeeded in driving them away. I came, like a faithful servant, to the rescue of my master when he found himself in a tight corner.

and holding out . . .: the author humorously says that the boys had the audacity to stretch out their black hands and demand a tip.

didn't do so badly: did fairly well.

stifling: suffocating, crowded.

stifling streets of Benares: the crowded streets of Benares with their oppressive atmosphere.

haze: light vapour or smoke in the air.

spicy: pungent.

the spicy golden haze: the pungent smoky air touched by the golden rays of the setting sun.

Malay States: to the south of Siam. In 1948, all the States were federated. The Federation of Malaya consists of nine States, Penang and Malacca.

inexpressible: indescribable.

repudiate: reject, decline.

Penang lawyer: a walking-stick made from the stem of a palm which grows in Penang.

Penang: an island off the north-west Malayan coast forming part of the Federation of Malaya. Upon its north-east coast is the port originally called Georgetown, now more widely known as Penang.

six-and-eightpenny: six shillings and eightpence, a traditional legal fee; remuneration for service.

inferior: poor.

I was with . . . inferior quality: it was in the Malay States that an incident happened which filled me with a pride and delight that I can hardly express in words. A Penang lawyer made an offer to my master. This Penang lawyer was not a legal adviser charging the traditional fee of six shillings and eightpence. It was a walking-stick of poor quality made of the stem of an East Asiatic palm. But my master spurned its offer. That was a great moment of my life—a moment of indescribable joy and pride.

Malacca cane: a cane, often mottled, obtained from a palm growing in Malacca.

which I consider . . . character: two things prove the essential nobility of my master's character. One was his repudiation of the offer made by a walking-stick in the Malay States, and the other was the fact that, unlike most travellers, he did not bring away a Malacca cane. These two things prove how noble-hearted my master is, for love of old things and loyalty to old friends are marks of a noble character.

mangosteen: a well-known East Indian fruit with a thick rind and white juicy pulp.

ecstatic: rapturous; full of intense joy.

when he first ate . . .: it was a great moment of my master's life—his eating of the first mangosteen. He was filled with a rapture of delight when he ate his first mangosteen.

mistook him: took him by mistake.

anarchist: one who believes in anarchism—the theory that all government is an evil; a terrorist.

'The man in the blue collar': this was how the police characterized him.

sultry: very hot.

alighting: getting down.

PAGE 31. *Kwala* (or *Kuala*) *Lumpur*: the capital and seat of the Government of Malaya. It is mainly Chinese in population, with Indians as the second community. It is linked to Singapore by a railway and a road.

Singapore: a city situated on the south-east of Singapore Island. It is separated from Malaya by a narrow strait which is spanned by a causeway.

I was with him . . .: the stick mentions here two funny incidents during its master's travels in Malaya. Both were cases of mistaken identity. The first happened at Penang, when he was mistaken for an anarchist by the police and perhaps arrested. Soon afterwards at a station between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore he was mistaken for the Governor and saluted.

wretched: miserable; such as causes distress or unhappiness.

wretched sea: the stick was very unhappy during the voyage as it was deprived of its master's company.

adventure: a daring, risky deed.

Hong-Kong: a British colony situated off the south-east coast of China.

musky: having a musk-like odour.

funicular: a funicular railway worked by a cable and stationary engine. It is by 'cable railways' that passengers and goods are conveyed up slopes too steep for normal types of railway.

climbs at such . . . falling down: the sharp angle at

which the funicular rises makes the houses appear as if they are falling down.

Shanghai: the largest city and leading port of China on the left bank of the Whangpoo, twelve miles from its mouth at Woosung.

rough: boisterous.

Kobe: a great port of Japan, situated on the north side of Osaka bay, sixteen miles west of Osaka.

rack: a stand on which articles are placed.

It was . . . rack: the stick liked walking for hours together in the company of its master high in the mountains, sometimes in the snow. It was much better than the rough sea voyage during which it had to stay away from its master on a cabin rack.

windy: wind-swept.

Honolulu: capital of the Hawaiian islands, situated on the south coast of Oahu. The Waikiki beach is a pleasure ground where surf-riding is the favourite amusement. The town is shielded from the prevailing north-east trade winds by the Koolan range.

crest: the ridge or top of a wave.

bathers ride . . .: surf-riding is a popular amusement on the Waikiki beach.

aquarium: an artificial tank or pond for the keeping of live aquatic plants or animals.

where the fish . . . know: the fish in the aquarium are so peculiar that they look more like people one knows than like fish.

between the Pacific and the Atlantic: between the Pacific coast on the west and the Atlantic coast on the east.

The lost stick says that, the use of sticks being not very common in America, it was almost the only stick in the whole of the western continent between the eastern and the western coasts.

America: the general name for the western continent and its adjacent islands, forming the main body of land

in the Western hemisphere. It is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Pacific Ocean.

where the best . . .: England, according to the stick (the stick of an Englishman), is the best place for walking.

I had looked forward to: had anticipated with pleasure.

weigh: bear.

heavily: with great weight; in a heavy manner.

to bear him up: to support him, to keep him from falling.

And I looked forward . . .: the stick here speaks like a servant who has rendered long and loyal service to its master. It says that it was waiting in eager expectation of the day when its master would grow old and would show a special favour to it by leaning heavily on its head. It would have considered it a great privilege and honour to hold him up and keep him from falling. And after that, when its master was gone, anybody might use it, for without its master it would consider itself to be as good as lost.

PAGE 32. *I cannot call you 'master' . . .*: for the stick there can be only one master—the one who has lost it. The man who is now using it is only its new owner and nothing more.

as your old one: as your old stick.

worthy: estimable.

If you do . . . worthy: if you like me more than your old stick, then certainly I would consider you to be a man without any worth.

pining: languishing, wasting away from grief.

For we . . . persons: the lost stick here says that, like itself, the old stick of its new owner must be languishing for him. He is, of course, not as worthy as its master. Indeed he is a much inferior man. But sticks come to love their masters even if they are inferior persons. That is their characteristic.

But it may be . . . all the same: the lost stick says that its master is incomparable. Nobody could possibly have a master like him. So it is not likely that the old stick of its new owner is pining just like it. But it must be pining all the same, for sticks soon come to like their masters even though they are inferior persons.

all the same: even though its master is not as good as the lost stick's master.

THE TELESCOPE

The piece is taken from *Power and Progress* by G. C. Thornley, M.A. The aim of the book, as the author himself says, is to introduce students to the use of scientific words and expressions in English. The student will find many such words and expressions in the piece and a familiarity with them will be of great advantage to him.

The telescope seems to have been first invented by an optician, Hans Lippershey of Middleburg, in 1608. It was from this telescope that all later ones proceeded. Galileo, the famous Italian scientist, hearing of the Dutchman's invention, made a telescope for himself, with which in 1610 he discovered three of Jupiter's moons. Galileo made several telescopes; the one he used most was about five feet long, with a lens about 29 inches in diameter and a magnification of about 33 diameters. In its simplest form, the telescope consists of an object glass in the form of a convex lens, which produces at its focus an image of a distant object, this image being then magnified by a small lens or eye-piece. The largest telescope in the world is the Mount Palomar reflector in America. It has a diameter of 200 inches.

PAGE 32. *The invention of the telescope . . .*: by turning a telescope on the sky, Galileo opened up a new path

in the advance of knowledge. It is to the telescope that we owe much of our knowledge of the sun and its family.

the heavens: the sky, the heavenly bodies.

modern ideas of the universe: i.e. based on those of Copernicus. It was with the help of the telescope that Galileo was able to prove that Copernicus was right and Ptolemy was wrong.

Three distinct stages in the development of modern ideas of the universe should be noted. The first stage began with the theory worked out by Ptolemy of Alexandria, according to which the earth was the centre of the universe, around which the sun and the stars revolved. This system held the field for many hundreds of years until it was superseded by the Copernican system worked out by Copernicus, a Pole, in the sixteenth century. According to the latter, the earth rotates daily on its axis, and the sun, and not the earth, is the centre around which the planets revolve. The chief difference between the Copernican theory and the modern one is that Copernicus believed that the planets moved in circles round the sun, but we think, as a result of the theory worked out by Kepler, that the planets move round the sun in ellipses. Newton showed that this was a consequence of the law of universal gravitation.

has advanced . . .: Galileo: the advance of knowledge is due to the theories of Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727), Laplace (1749-1827) and Einstein (1879-).

incredible: unbelievable.

PAGE 33. *kilometre*: a measure of length; one thousand metres (nearly five-eighths of a mile).

the sun and its family: the solar system.

its family: the group of celestial bodies which, held by the sun's attraction, revolve round it. The group

comprises 9 major planets attended by 28 satellites, and about 1546 minor planets, as well as comets and meteors.

prevented from escaping . . .: the earth and the other planets revolving round the sun are held in their orbits by its attraction.

PAGE 34. *gravitation*: attraction.

Planets have . . .: planets have no light of their own. They receive light and heat from the sun.

Venus: one of the most important of the planets. It passes through phases similar to those of the moon, and at its brightest is far more brilliant than any fixed star, often being visible in daylight. It can never be above the horizon for much more than three hours after sunset, when it is an 'evening star', or for the same time before sunrise, when it is a 'morning star'. It is surrounded by an atmosphere abounding in clouds and has probably no life of any sort on it.

Schiaparelli (1835-1910): Italian astronomer. In 1877 he began a detailed study of the surface features of Mars and constructed charts of the planet. He discovered a number of linear markings or channels (*canali*, hence generally known as canals) which he concluded to be depressions for the passage of water. In 1882, he announced that some of these appeared to be double and suggested that they might be the work of intelligent beings.

startled the world: took the world by surprise.

that there were men: Schiaparelli suggested that the double linear markings might be the work of intelligent living creatures.

Martian: adjective from Mars; pertaining to the planet Mars.

PAGE 35. *zero centigrade*: zero in the centigrade thermometer is at the point at which water freezes.

thin: rarefied. The atmosphere of Mars is supposed to be exceedingly rare.

there is some sort of plant life: Schiaparelli discovered dusty markings and ruddy areas on Mars. Lowell, who elaborated Schiaparelli's views, found that the dark areas showed considerable detail, and concluded that they were in the nature of marshland or oases. His observation of changes in the dark areas has been confirmed and it seems probable that these changes are caused by the growth of vegetation.

is there animal life?: it is not possible to ascertain whether there is any form of animal life on Mars; it cannot be said that the conditions are such as to make such life impossible, though the rapid and extreme changes of temperature and the thin air make the conditions very difficult for life. A few astronomers think that the thread-like markings on Mars are artificial canals evidencing the presence of intelligent beings.

Saturn: the sixth planet in order of distance from the sun and the second largest, being next in magnitude to Jupiter; it is a conspicuous object to the naked eye. The most remarkable feature of Saturn is its ring system consisting of a series of three thin, flat, concentric rings, each one being parallel and in the same plane with the planet's equator.

moons: satellites, all outside the rings.

Sir William Herschel (1738-1822): British astronomer of German birth. On 13 March 1781, in the course of one of his sweeps, he detected an object whose image showed a perceptible disc. He thought at first it was a comet, but it eventually proved to be a planet, the first to be discovered within historic times. He called it *Georgium Sidus* (star) in honour of George III but the name *Uranus* was soon adopted.

another name: *Georgium Sidus* in honour of George III.

of its irregular course: of the irregularities in the motion of Uranus.

gravitational pull: attraction.

worked out: found out by calculation.

which must be . . .: the two mathematicians concluded that the irregular motion of Uranus was produced by the attraction of a more distant, unknown planet.

Leverrier (1811-77): French astronomer.

PAGE 36. *Adams*: John Adams, English mathematician. Both scientists attributed the irregular motion of Uranus to the action of a more distant planet. Leverrier deduced the position of this planet, which was discovered by Galle at Berlin on 23 September 1846 during a search undertaken at his request. The position of the planet was also predicted independently by Adams.

astonishing example of the power of mathematics: the discovery of Neptune as the result of the computations of Leverrier and Adams is regarded as one of the greatest triumphs of mathematical astronomy.

Pluto: the most remote known planet of the solar system. It was discovered by C. W. Tombaugh in 1930 as a result of prediction and research originated in 1905 by Dr Lowell. It is invisible to the naked eye.

it is so very far away: it is the most remote known planet of the solar system.

gaseous: in the form or of the nature of gas.

in a gaseous state: the parts, as they were torn out from the sun, were composed entirely of gas.

exploded: burst.

this theory: namely that the 'planets were torn away from the sun by the gravitational pull of another star that came near to it. Astronomers now think that the planets were formed as a result of the explosion of another star revolving round the sun. The force of the explosion sent most of the star into space but some

amounts of gas remained near the sun. In course of time the gas became cool and hardened into masses. These split into pieces forming planets.

THE TIGER SMILED

The piece is taken from *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* by Jim Corbett. Born in Kumaon in 1875, Colonel Corbett went to school in India and was for twenty years an official on the Indian railways. During the First World War he helped to recruit more than 5,000 men from the Kumaon hills and led the 70th Kumaon Labour Corps in France. In the Second World War Corbett again recruited men from the hills, and, after recovering from a severe illness, trained British troops in jungle fighting in the Central and United Provinces and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He has now settled in East Africa. Col. Corbett, an intrepid and keen hunter, spent thirty-two years in the more or less regular pursuit of man-eaters in the North Indian hills. In the four books so far published he tells of the many tigers that fell to his trusty rifle and unaided daring. He has a wonderful knowledge of the ways of the tiger and is well acquainted with the natural features of the hilly wooded tracts of Kumaon—the scene of his hunting—on the main Himalayan range to the north of Uttar Pradesh. He knows and loves the jungles, and his appreciation of Nature is often communicated in the pages of his books. His narrative style is characterized by the sure feeling for suspense and drama and an uncanny communication of atmosphere and circumstantial detail.

Here he relates how he had been after the famous 'Chowgarh' tigress for some time. But the animal had always succeeded in eluding him until at last he met

her near Kala Agar to the east of Naini Tal on 11 April 1930, and bagged her.

[Corbett has already described how he had been watching for the tigress from a four-foot high rock. There was an open plot in front of him. A buffalo was tied to a pine tree as a bait. One of his attendants, Madho Singh, who had served in a Garhwal Regiment in the first World War and was now a member of the U.P. Civil Pioneer Force, was sitting on an oak tree and shouting loudly to 'call up' the tigress. Another attendant was feeding the buffalo with grass. Corbett's plan almost succeeded. Attracted by Madho Singh's shoutings, the tigress came but did not stay there long. Corbett lost an opportunity but he was sure that she would come back. He left the rock and went out, accompanied by his two attendants, in search of a vantage point from which he would get a better view of the open plot of land.]

PAGE 36. *ravine*: a deep, narrow gorge.

far: remote, distant.

heavy: thick.

undergrowth: underbrush; shrubs or small trees growing under larger ones.

inadvisable: unwise.

PAGE 37. *to take to*: to go to; to betake oneself to.

to work up: to make one's way up.

pick up: take to again.

and pick up . . .: Corbett made a detour in order to avoid the undergrowth. He thought it would not be wise to go through it, as it would be good cover for the tigress.

nightjar: a bird which flies only at night and sits on the ground during the day. It is seldom noticed till it moves.

fluttered off: flapped off; 'to flutter' is to move the wings rapidly without flying or with short flights.

straw-coloured: of light yellow colour (like that of dry straw).

rich: deep.

odd: peculiar; of unusual shape.

clutch: a set of eggs.

receptacle: a containing vessel.

cupping my left hand: forming the palm of my left hand into a cup-like hollow. Corbett put the eggs in the hollow of his left hand.

packed them round: fixed them in place and surrounded them.

drop: an abrupt fall.

had . . . as glass: on account of the action of rushing water, the rough broken surface of the rock had become as smooth as glass; the roughness had been worn down into a glassy smoothness.

foothold: a place for the foot to rest on; footing.

it was . . . foothold: it was impossible to get a footing on the rock on account of its steepness.

edge: brink.

slide down: slip down.

flying leap: a hurried leap; a 'flying leap' in athletics is a jump with a running start. The men ran a short distance and then took a leap hurriedly.

landed: got down; alighted.

agitated: excited.

due to the scraping of my clothes: on account of the scratching, harsh sound produced by his clothes brushing the rocks as he slid down.

a deep-throated growl: a thick, deep growl coming from low in the throat; a throaty growl.

PAGE 38. *Not a satisfactory reason . . .*: Corbett was not prepared to believe the two men when they said that they had heard the growl of the tigress. She was looking out for dinner, and tigers do not normally betray their presence by growling. The only explanation

that Corbett could offer, though not a satisfactory one, was that the tigress was following them as they left the open space. At a place where the ravine had become narrow, she was about to spring on Corbett when he suddenly disappeared as he slid down. The tigress was balked of her prey and growled in disappointment. This explanation, however, is most unsatisfactory, as it assumes that the tigress had marked Corbett out for dinner, taking no notice of his two attendants.

in a bunch: close together.

leaning over: inclining towards; overhanging.

tumbled: jumbled.

bank: wall, ridge.

damming: blocking, obstructing.

the giant slate: the overhanging rock that looked like a huge school slate.

PAGE 39. *looked straight . . . face*: I found myself looking straight at the tigress, who was also looking straight at me.

scoured-out: washed smooth by running water.

overhung by: overgrown with.

tangle of thorn bushes: a confused mass of intertwined thorn bushes.

glissaded: slid.

tucked: drawn in.

on the face . . . long absence: Corbett had found the tigress after a long search, and as he looked into her face, it seemed to him as if she was smiling. It was like the pleased expression on the face of a dog when it sees its master after a long time.

flashed: passed suddenly and swiftly.

it was . . . move: he thought that the first move should come from him.

diagonally: obliquely.

safety-catch: a small lever on a rifle which has to be released before the rifle can be fired.

in order to get it to bear on: in order that it might be pointed at.

muzzle: open end of the rifle.

swung: moved.

hardly perceptibly: almost without being seen; the movement of the rifle, as it was swung slowly round, was not noticed by the tigress.

the stock: the butt.

PAGE 40. *extend*: stretch out.

the swing: the act of moving round.

at full stretch: fully extended.

to tell: to have its effect. His arm was fully stretched out and he was beginning to feel the weight of the rifle.

who had . . . mine: who had all the time kept her eyes fixed on him.

with the pleased expression: with the smiling look.

the barrel: the metal tube of a gun.

it appeared . . . was paralysed: it appeared as if my arm was affected with paralysis. The weight of the rifle was telling on Corbett, and his arm seemed to have lost all power and sensation as if it had been paralysed.

the movement was completed at last: the rifle was swung round at last.

was pointing: was aimed.

the report: the explosive noise; the loud sound as the rifle went off.

exaggerated: made all the louder; to 'exaggerate' is to increase or magnify beyond the normal. As the space was restricted, the report of the rifle appeared all the louder.

recoil: rebound; the rifle recoiled as it went off and he felt its impact.

tangible: palpable, definite; that can be readily felt by the senses or the mind.

for all: judging by.

grip: power, hold.

nightmare: an oppressive and fantastically horrible dream.

critical: crucial.

and but for these tangible proofs . . .: Corbett fired the rifle. There was a loud report and the rifle recoiled. The impact of the recoil and the loud report were tangible proofs that the rifle had gone off. The shot produced no apparent result, as the tiger remained perfectly still. Without the tangible proofs that the rifle had gone off, he would certainly have felt like a man in the throes of a nightmare, in which at a dangerous moment, he presses the trigger but the gun refuses to go off.

bullet-hole: the hole in the body made by the bullet as it entered.

shattered: smashed.

came to a halt: suddenly stopped.

instinctively: without any conscious thought.

PAGE 41. *to relieve me of it*: to give me much-needed relief by taking the rifle from me.

made for: went towards.

pads: paws.

the thread of human life: the course of individual existence. The Greeks imagined there were three Fates, one who spun the thread of life, one who determined its length and one who cut it off.

while the game was in her hands: while she was able to direct the game and was sure to win; while she had Corbett, her prey, entirely in her power.

Happy Hunting Grounds: the regions to which, according to the belief of North American Indians, the souls of warriors and hunters pass after death, there to be happy in hunting and feasting.

shears: large pair of scissors.

the shears that . . .: Corbett here tells how the tigress

that had killed so many human beings was at last killed by him. The tables were turned; the biter was bitten. The shears which had helped her cut the threads of 64 human lives at last cut the thread of her own life while she had Corbett, her prey, entirely in her power. She was playing a sort of game and was confident of coming out victorious. As a matter of fact the game had been so far entirely in her favour—she had killed so many men. Then there was a sharp and sudden reversal of her fortunes. She met her master in Corbett and fell a victim to his rifle.

arrested: stopped.

launched: taken, started.

imperative: urgently necessary.

cornered: driven into a difficult position from which no escape was possible.

PAGE 42. *wiped me out*: removed me; pushed me out.

usually has fatal results: usually results in the death of the person wiped out.

made a detour: took a roundabout way.

restore: give back.

rightful owner: i.e. the mother.

I plead guilty: I confess that I am guilty.

brother: fellow.

and now within . . . had changed . . .: Corbett admits that he is as superstitious as his fellow sportsmen. He had been stalking the tigress for over a year without being able to get a shot at her. As soon as he picked up the eggs, he succeeded in meeting and bagging her. So the eggs brought him good luck.

depression: hollow, cavity.

that did duty as a nest: that served the purpose of a nest.

brooding: hatching.

matched: corresponded to; was in harmony with.

mottled: marked with spots of different colours; spotted.

THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS

NORMAN MCKINNEL (1870-1932), son of a Scotch engineer, was drawn to the stage in his youth and had a distinguished career as an actor, having played many well-known characters in the plays of Shakespeare, Shaw and Galsworthy. He has been called a 'typical great actor of the naturalistic school'. As a playwright, McKinnel wrote only three plays including this one-act drama. This play is founded on the opening chapters of *Les Misérables*, the masterpiece of Victor Hugo (1802-85), one of the greatest French writers of the nineteenth century.

McKinnel has made some minor changes in his play, deviating from the story of the encounter of Jean Valjean, the Convict, with Monseigneur Welcome, Bishop of D—in Hugo's novel.

PAGE 43. *The Convict*: Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's original novel, convicted after a trial for stealing bread for his dying sister (here wife). He broke prison and came to the Bishop's house, famished after a long starvation.

Marie: pronounced Ma-ree, with accent on second syllable.

gendarmes: military police in France.

substantially furnished: equipped with solid furniture.

R., L., L.C., R.C., C.: stand respectively for right, left, left-centre, right-centre and centre of the stage.

settle: a long seat with arms and a high back.

crucifix: image of Christ on the Cross.

kitchen dresser: a sideboard in the kitchen for china, forks, knives, etc.

cupboard (pronounced kubad): a large wooden cabinet (almirah) with shelves for food and crockery.

discovered: seen on the stage as the curtain rises or is drawn.

laying the cloth: spreading the cloth on the table for the meal.

PAGE 44. *Monseigneur*: literally 'my lord', French form of addressing a prince, cardinal, archbishop or bishop.

mon Dieu: French for 'my God'—an oath expressing surprise.

nincompoop: simpleton, fool.

PAGE 45. *Monsieur*: French for 'Mr', 'Sir'.

mere (pronounced mair): French for 'mother'.

PAGE 46. *bailiff*: officer employed for collecting rents, taxes, etc.

PAGE 48. *minx*: pert girl.

PAGE 53. *a number*: the number 15729 was the convict's number in the jail. Convicts in jails are known by the numbers allotted to them.

PAGE 54. *hulks*: bodies of dismantled ships used as a prison.

PAGE 56. *Faith, Hope, and Charity*: the three main Christian virtues.

PAGE 58. *scoundrelly*: roguish.

PAGE 62. *prie-dieu*: a French expression meaning a kneeling-desk or chair with tall, sloping back, for use in praying.

Slow Curtain: the curtain comes down slowly, or is slowly drawn together, as the Bishop is shown kneeling in prayer.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616) was born in the village of Stratford-on-Avon in a beautiful and romantic district of rural England. In 1587 he joined a company of players in London. In that great city he wrote his memorable plays for the stage, sometimes acting minor parts. He soon made a name for himself and

after about twenty-three years went back to Stratford—a man of wealth and fame—to live a quiet life amid the scenes of his early years. He passed away when he was only fifty-two.

One of the greatest poets of the world and probably the greatest dramatist, Shakespeare wrote fine poetry in his two long poems and in his sonnets, and created in his thirty-seven plays characters of a wonderful variety, drawn from every walk of life. His plays are classified as:

- (a) Comedies, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, etc.
- (b) Histories (Historical Plays), such as *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, etc., and
- (c) Tragedies, such as *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

These have drawn the warmest admiration from readers all the world over from generation to generation.

This piece—a song—is taken from the Comedy *As You Like It*. It is sung by Amiens, one of the followers of the Duke, who has been banished from his dominions by his brother Frederick. Amiens sings of the sweetness and freedom of the simple forest life as contrasted with the intrigues and pettiness of the artificial life at the Royal Court.

PAGE 63. *St. 1. greenwood tree*: a tree covered with green leaves.

turn his merry note . . . throat: sing merrily, in tune with the 'full-throated ease' of the warbling birds.

No enemy . . . rough weather: Man's worst enemy, his fellow man, is absent here; winter, with its bitter cold and biting winds, is the only enemy that one has to contend with in this forest life. But this enemy causes only physical pain, it cannot break the heart as 'man's ingratitude' does.

- *St. 2. Who doth ambition shun*: one who has learnt the bitterness of the ambitious life at court and is therefore ready to give it up.

shun: avoid.

Seeking the food he eats: getting his own food, not living on the fruits of others' labour.

pleased with what he gets: living a contented life.

TO BLOSSOMS

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674) was born in London and graduated from Cambridge. He became a vicar in Devonshire, but was ejected for his Royalist principles after King Charles was defeated and executed by the Parliamentary party under Cromwell. Herrick's poetry owes its appeal to its delicate grace and rich imagery.

PAGE 63. *blossoms*: mass of flowers, especially on a fruit-tree.

St. 1. pledges: promises. The flowers promise the fruitfulness of the tree. They show that the fruit will soon be coming.

date: time

blush: become red.

PAGE 64. *St. 2. What! were ye born . . .*: the poet regrets that the beautiful blossoms are so short-lived.

St. 3. brave: excellent, beautiful in appearance.

though ne'er so brave: however excellent or good-looking they may be.

glide: move smoothly.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT

THOMAS GRAY (1716-71) was born in London, and was educated first at Eton and then at Cambridge. He was offered the laureateship in 1757, being recog-

nized as the foremost poet of the day. He refused the honour, and was later appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

Among his best known poems are 'On a Distant Prospect of Eton College', 'Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat', 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', 'The Progress of Poesy', etc. It is, however, the 'Elegy' on which Gray's distinction as a poet of a very high order rests most solidly.

PAGE 64. *St. 1. gayest*: brightest.

dy'd: coloured.

azure: sky-blue.

that blow: that blossom.

demurest: most sober or serious.

tabby: a female cat.

pensive: thoughtful, melancholy.

Selima: name of the cat.

the lake below: the water in the tub of goldfishes.

Note the mock-heroic style; the cat and the tub of water are made to appear dignified.

St. 2. conscious tail: the tail that moved to show the sense of joy and pride.

declar'd: manifested; clearly showed.

the velvet: the soft and smooth mass of flesh.

vies with: strives for superiority over; seeks to excel.

tortoise: a tortoise-shell cat is one with black and yellow markings, like the shell of a tortoise.

of jet: black like jet.

emerald: green like the emerald.

she saw: the cat saw all her beautiful limbs and features reflected in the water of the tub.

purr'd applause: expressed her self-admiration by her continued low, murmuring sound of self-satisfaction.

PAGE 65. *St. 3. still had she gaz'd*: she would have continued to gaze.

'midst the tide: in the water of the tub that was set

in motion by the fishes swimming in it. The expression 'tide'—another exaggeration—has been used to keep up the mock-heroic style.

glide: move smoothly.

Genii: presiding deities or spirits.

Two angel forms . . . the stream: two goldfishes swimming in the water of the tub are thus described in a humorous way.

scaly armour: the coat covered with scales.

Tyrian hue: purple colour, like that of the celebrated dye formerly prepared at Tyre from shell-fish.

betray'd: unexpectedly revealed or showed from the background.

Thro' richest purple . . . gleam: the colour of the fishes' scales was purple, but sometimes there was a golden flash.

St. 4. hapless: unlucky.

Nymph: poetic nomenclature for the cat.

whisker: stiff hair (on the face of a cat).

A whisker first and then a claw: the cat was advancing in her attempt to get at the fish.

ardent: burning, keen.

prize: a highly valued thing; an attractive object of great value.

despise: regard with contempt.

averse: indifferent.

St. 5. presumptuous: overbold.

intent: purposeful.

the gulf: the space between herself and the water.

malignant: harmful, unfavourable.

verge: border, side.

beguil'd: deceived.

St. 6. eight times: proverbially a cat has nine lives.

emerging: coming out.

dolphin: a toothed whale, resembling the porpoise, about eight to ten feet long. The dolphin is here personified as a 'watery god'.

Nereid: a sea-nymph, one of the daughters of the sea-god, Nereus. They attended Neptune, riding on sea-horses.

stirr'd: moved.

Tom: a servant of the household.

Susan: a maid serving in the household.

A Fav'rite has no friend: one who receives particular favours from the master is disliked by others.

PAGE 66. *St. 7. fröm hence undeceiv'd*: enlightened by this story.

beauties: beautiful ladies.

retriev'd: recalled; brought back.

one false step is ne'er retrieved: anything done wrongly by mistake cannot be undone.

caution: heedfulness; prudence; discretion.

be with caution bold: be daring with discretion; do not be rashly bold. Cf. 'Discretion is the better part of valour.'

lawful prize: legitimate reward; something that may be coveted without impropriety.

glisters: glitters.

Nor all, that glisters, gold: appearances, however bright and attractive, are not to be taken for granted. 'All that glitters is not gold' is a very common quotation.

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

ROBERT BURNS (1759-96) was born at Alloway in Ayrshire in Scotland. He was set to work as a farm labourer, his father having to pay for his cottage by giving labour in lieu of rent. But the boy's education was not neglected. Among the early influences which shaped his genius may be mentioned the popular tales, ballads and songs of the rural folk. Popular Scotch poetry was the soil on which his genius began to thrive. Thus he came to be regarded in later years as the national poet of Scotland. His poetry, with his strong Scotch flavour, is remarkable for a natural fire

and gift of expression. He wrote an astonishingly large number of 'the most beautiful, tender, passionate and vivacious songs in any language'. Adapted to old Scotch airs, these were here and there moulded on old Scotch words. For the mere essence of poetry and spirit of song Burns has few equals in the literature of the world.

Among the many beautiful lyrics from the pen of Burns may be mentioned 'John Anderson, my Jo', 'Comin' thro' the Rye', 'The Banks of Doon' and 'Mary Morison'. Among his famous songs are 'Auld Lang Syne', 'Scots wha hae', 'A Red, Red Rose' and 'It was a' for our Richfu' King.'

PAGE 66. *for a' that*: in spite of all that; *all* has been shortened into *a'*. In this poem it is a refrain, often with little or no meaning.

St. 1. Is there . . .: supply 'anyone' after 'Is there'.

This stanza means: If anyone is ashamed ('hangs his head') of being poor, we will have nothing to do with him ('we pass him by'), for he is a coward and a slave. We are not ashamed of poverty.

toils: labours.

obscure: unknown to fame; humble.

guinea stamp: a design on a guinea coin of no intrinsic value.

rank . . .: just as in a golden guinea it is the gold which is valuable, not the design, so it is the man who is valuable, not the position he occupies in the society.

gowd: Scotch for 'gold'.

St. 2. humely: Scotch for 'homely'; humble.

hodden-gray: a coarse gray cloth made of undyed wool.

gie: Scotch for 'give'.

knaves: false and dishonest men. This line means that there is nothing to be ashamed of in being the servant of foolish or worthless people (by helping them to dress in silk clothes or pouring out wine for them to drink with their meals).

tinsel: gaudy; attractive but worthless.

sae: Scotch for 'so'.

St. 3. birkie: fellow.

ca'd: called.

wha: Scotch for 'who'.

struts: walks in a pompous manner, with affected dignity.

coof: a dolt; a dull or stupid fellow.

PAGE 67. *riband*: badge of honour, such as the Blue Ribbon of the Order of the Garter, the Red Ribbon of the Order of the Bath, etc.

star: also a badge of honour.

St. 4. mak: Scotch for 'make'.

belted: wearing a belt as a mark of rank. Sons of noble families who distinguished themselves in heroic deeds used to be invested with belts when they were knighted by the king.

aboon: Scotch for 'above'.

aboon his might: beyond his power (to create).

guid: Scotch for 'good'.

guid faith: an exclamation meaning 'certainly', 'without doubt'.

mauna: Scotch for 'must not'.

fa': Scotch for 'lay claim to'.

Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!: a prince can create a lord or a knight, but not an honest man. That certainly is beyond his power.

pith: substance, essence.

pride: (here) dignity.

St. 5. gree: prize.

may bear the gree: may carry off the prize; may prove their superiority.

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821), forming one of a glorious trio with Byron and Shelley, was the youngest of the

'Romantic Poets' and died much earlier than the other two. His poetry, however, attained a maturity unusual in one so young. With the help of Shelley, he published in 1817 *Poems by John Keats*. In 1818, he wrote 'Endymion', which was savagely criticized, and commenced his 'Hyperion'. He began 'The Eve of St Agnes' in 1819 and wrote various poems, such as 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', in the same year. About the same time he wrote his great odes 'On a Grecian Urn', 'To a Nightingale' and 'To Autumn'. In 1820 appeared his 'Lamia' and other poems. Keats was by now seriously ill with consumption. He sailed for Italy in September, reached Rome in November, and died there. He desired that there should be engraved on his tomb the words 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water'. His death was lamented by Shelley in his 'Adonais'.

The poem 'To One Who Has Been Long In City Pent' was published in the small volume of verse brought out in 1817. The first line of the poem is reminiscent of a line in Milton's 'Paradise Lost' where Satan, on entering the Garden of Eden, feels 'As one who long in populous City pent, . . .' The poem is a *sonnet* of the Miltonic or Italian form. The first eight of the fourteen lines form the octet and the next six, the sestet.

PAGE 67. *pent*: confined.

Full in the smile of the blue firmament: directly in the smiling face of the blue sky; looking at the open, bright sky overhead.

PAGE 68. *fatigued*: tired out.

lair: bed; a place to rest in (now restricted to wild beasts' lying place).

pleasant lair of wavy grass: the soft and cool bed of grass swaying in the wind.

debonair: gay, sprightly, genial, pleasant (originally from the French phrase, *de bonne aire*, of good disposition).

languishment: tender, sentimental melancholy.

Philomel: nightingale (a sweet-toned bird which sings at night).

career: journey, progress.

glided by: passed away quietly or unperceived.

an angel's tear: a dew-drop, which may be imagined to be a tear dropped by an angel in the sky.

E'en like . . . tear: the sweet day has passed away as gently and imperceptibly as an angel's tear or a dew-drop falling through ether.

ether: the upper regions of the sky, the heavens.

THE CLOUD

PERCY BYSSHE (pronounced Bish) SHELLEY (1792-1822), who introduced a new note in English poetry, was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford, but was sent down from Oxford in 1811 for circulating a pamphlet on 'The Necessity of Atheism'. His 'Alastor' was published in 1816. In the same year began his friendship with Byron and he spent the summer in Switzerland with him. To this period belongs his 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty'. In the winter of 1816-17 he wrote, among other poems, the poem later published in 1818 as 'The Revolt of Islam'. In 1818 he left England for Italy. Early in 1819, he was in Rome; the same year saw the publication of his 'The Cenci' and the composition of his great lyrical drama, 'Prometheus Unbound', published in 1820. He moved to Pisa at the end of 1819 and it was here that some of his finest lyrics, including the 'Ode to the West Wind', 'To a Skylark' and 'The Cloud', were written. He was drowned in a storm when sailing near Leghorn on 8 July 1822, in his thirtieth year. His body was cremated and the ashes buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome.

He is recognized as the greatest lyric poet that England or modern Europe has produced.

Shelley's poetry has a rich imagery and a haunting musical quality, and is marked by his intense idealism. The similies and metaphors that make up the imagery dazzle us by their radiant splendour. The words and phrases create an atmosphere of melody, stirring up strange things in the depths of our soul. In all his poetry, there burns a prophetic fire—an inspiring faith in Man's progress towards the Golden Age.

'The Cloud' is a lyric of pure Nature. It is free from the slightest element of human emotion. The Cloud is personified as a living creature. It is made to tell the story of its origin and of its nature and activities. Throughout the poem are scattered similies and metaphors that sometimes describe an ordinary natural event by something unfamiliar, as when the silent appearance of the cloud in a bright, clear sky is likened to a child from the womb, to a ghost from the tomb. By virtue of its song-quality, 'The Cloud' is one of the most wonderful creations in the whole range of English poetry.

(Although the text gives us the entire poem, only the opening stanza and the closing one have been prescribed as part of the English Syllabus for 1957 and 1958.)

PAGE 68. St. 1. *thirsting flowers*: the flowers drooping in the heat and therefore eager to drink the rain-water.

From the seas: sucking up water from the seas and rivers in the form of watery vapour (which forms the clouds).

From my wings: the cloud flies about the sky like a bird, and is therefore imagined to have wings.

the dews: small drops of moisture; here, light spring showers.

rocked to rest: lulled to rest by the swaying branches, as a baby in a cradle is rocked by the mother.

their mother: may mean the Earth, out of which all plants and flowers grow. Mother Earth may rock or sway the plant and its branches by her breezes, using

these as a cradle for the buds. In the opinion of some commentators, however, the plant itself may be the mother, swaying in the breeze and sunlight.

wield: use.

the flail: a wooden implement for threshing grain.

lashing hail: hail striking as if with a whip. The hailstones are compared to the chaff flying in all directions.

dissolve it: make it (the hail) melt away.

laugh as I pass in thunder: disappear with a loud, hearty laugh, which is the thunder-clap. 'Laugh', according to some commentators, may refer also to the lightning flash which precedes a thunder-clap.

Last Stanza

PAGE 70. *the daughter of Earth and Water*: the cloud is formed out of the moisture of the earth and the vapour rising from seas and rivers.

nursling of the Sky: the sky is a foster-mother to the cloud, for it is in the sky that the cloud takes a definite shape and grows in size.

pass through the pores: rise, as vapour, and fall, as rain, through the minutest holes between particles of water on the ocean's surface and the smallest crevices on the surface of the earth.

I change, but I cannot die: there is a continuous cycle of vapour rising from sea and land and forming the clouds in the sky, the cloud dissolving in rain, and the rain falling on earth and water and again turning into vapour. So the cloud changes its form only, and is always continuing in some shape or other.

PAGE 71. *the pavilion of Heaven*: the vault of the sky, looking like a large tent.

convex gleams: bright bars of light, shaped like the outside of a circle or sphere.

the blue dome of air: a cloudless, blue vault which has only air in it. The blue colour and the vaulted shape

of the sky are due to the action of the sun's rays and the winds.

silently laugh: the thunder-clap is not then heard.

cenotaph: a sepulchral monument erected in honour of a deceased person whose body is elsewhere (originally from Greek, *kenotaphion*, 'empty tomb').

silently . . . cenotaph: the cloud laughs to see how foolish the sun's rays and the winds have been in imagining that the cloud is dead.

caverns of rain: depths or hollows where the rain-water has fallen.

a ghost from the tomb: a spirit that has risen from the tomb. The cloud is believed to be dead. So the winds and the sunrays build a blue vault in the sky as its tomb. Then the cloud rises again from earth and water, and by spreading itself over the sky, 'unbuilds' the blue dome, that is, makes it disappear at once.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

GEORGE GORDON BYRON (1788-1824) was born in London and was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. While at Cambridge, he wrote his *Hours of Idleness*, at first named *Juvenilia*, which evoked severe criticism. The young poet then went on a continental tour. On his return he published the first two cantos of his famous long poem 'Childe Harold'. For the next few years he wrote other poetical works till he left England never to return, being embittered by the adverse comments of the people around him. Though a restless traveller on the continent, Byron wrote much—completing two more cantos of 'Childe Harold' and producing some really good dramas and a few satirical poems. His extravagant life had a premature end in 1824 when he set out to join the

Greek insurgents and caught a fever which proved fatal in a few days.

Immensely popular as a powerful poet in his lifetime, Byron exercised a great influence on the Romantic movement. His popularity rested chiefly on his attacks on prevailing hypocrisy, the novelty of the oriental atmosphere of glamour and passion, the dynamic character of his heroes, and the ease and fluency of his verse which attained here and there a real poetic charm.

Historical Background: Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar III, is said to have been the last King of Babylon. He was slain in the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, the King of the Medes and Persians, in 538 B.C. He had a strange intimation of his impending fate in the word written by an invisible hand upon the wall, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, which meant, as supposedly interpreted by Daniel, 'to number, to number, to weigh, to divide'.

No ancient historian, however, mentions the name of Belshazzar as one of the successors of Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions tell of one Bel-sar-uzar, the son of Nabonidus, the last King of Babylon. The son was probably associated with the father on the throne.

The title: refers to the strange writing on the wall seen by Belshazzar.

PAGE 71. *St. 1. the King:* Belshazzar, the last Chaldean King of Babylon.

satraps: governors of provinces.

throng'd: crowded, were assembled in large numbers.

Judah: the land of the Jews—also called Judea.

deem'd divine: considered holy, being used in the Temple of the Jews. These are referred to as 'Jehovah's vessels' in the next line. Nebuchadnezzar had carried

off these holy vessels or cups from Judea along with the Jews who were taken captive.

the godless Heathen: the Babylonian king, who was an impious pagan or non-believer.

Jehovah's vessels . . . wine: the gold cups used in the service of Jehovah or God in the Jewish temple were now put to an unholy use as drinking vessels by the impious king. This was one of the many acts of sacrilege for which he had to lose his kingdom and his life.

St. 2 a hand: a mysterious hand.

as if on sand: making a deep impression, as on sand.

A solitary hand: only a hand.

traced: sketched, wrote.

wand: stick, a long and slender rod.

PAGE 72. *St. 3. shook*: trembled, being alarmed.

bade . . . rejoice: ordered the festivities to be stopped.

wax'd: grew.

tremulous: quivering, unsteady.

lore: learning.

expound: to explain, to interpret.

mar: spoil.

mirth: merry festivity.

St. 4. Chaldea: ancient Babylonia, noted for its knowledge of astrology.

seers: prophets, soothsayers.

here they have no skill: in this matter of interpreting the writing on the wall, their skill is of no avail.

unknown: strange.

untold: uninterpreted.

sage: wise.

St. 5. captive: prisoner, referring to the captive young Jew named Daniel.

read: (here) interpreted.

The morrow . . . true: what happened on the following morning proved the correctness of his interpretation.

PAGE 73. *St. 6. Belshazzar's grave . . .*: this was

Daniel's interpretation of the strange writing on the wall.

in the balance weigh'd: measured in the divine balance, judged by the divine standard.

Is light . . . clay: has been found to be no better than worthless clay. In spite of all his pomp and show of power, Belshazzar has been found to be lacking in real worth. So he has been doomed to complete destruction.

shroud: sheet wrapped round a corpse.

robe of state: the royal garment.

canopy: covering over the throne.

the stone: the stone placed over the grave.

Mede: native of Medea, situated in what is now the north-western part of modern Iran. The Medes were, in their days of glory, a bold and warlike race, very skilful with the bow; they were also noted horsemen. Later, the whole of Medea was annexed to the Persian Empire.

The Mede . . . throne: In 539 B.C. Cyrus, King of Persia, invaded Babylonia. Golryas, Governor of Kurdistan, soon entered Babylon with the army of Cyrus. A few months later, Cyrus came to Babylon and proclaimed himself King of Babylonia.

THE SCHOLAR

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843), son of a respectable Bristol linen-draper, was educated first at Westminster School and then at Balliol College, Oxford. He became a close friend and associate of the great poet S. T. Coleridge. He was a most prolific writer of both prose and poetical works. In 1813 he became Poet Laureate. As predicted by Macaulay, his longer poems have now lost their popularity. He is now best known by some of his shorter poems, such as, 'The

Battle of Blenheim', 'The Holy Tree', 'The Inchcape Rock', and the poem beginning with the line 'My days among the Dead are past'. His *Life of Nelson*, however, belongs to universal literature. He did some valuable work in translating some well-known books from foreign languages. He died from the after-effects of excessive mental work.

The title of the poem appears in an Oxford anthology as 'Among his Books'. It is interesting to note that Southey had collected as many as 14,000 volumes and was often seen in his later days patting those books affectionately.

PAGE 73. *St. 1. the Dead*: the dead authors, 'the master minds of old', the great thinkers of the past.

past: would now be spelt *passed*.

behold: see.

Where'er these . . . cast: in whatever direction I chance to look, i.e., in all directions, all around me.

never-failing: constant.

St. 2. weal: state of well-being; prosperity.

woe: suffering, adversity.

bedewed: moistened, as with dew.

thoughtful gratitude: gratefulness that comes from contemplation (of the benefits derived from their writings).

PAGE 74. *St. 3. condemn*: censure or blame.

Their virtues . . . condemn: I have no blind admiration for those great thinkers. Like a true friend, I am not blind to their demerits while I admire their merits.

partake: share.

Partake their hopes and fears: am in entire sympathy with all their feelings, sharing their hopes and fears.

St. 4. anon: very soon.

My place . . . will be: I shall be with them when I die. I look forward to the happy day of union with the great masters—a union that will bring me the same love and honour that they now enjoy.

Through all Futurity: eternally.

That will not . . . the dust: that will not end with the end of this earthly life.

TO THE CUCKOO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850), one of the leading English poets of the Romantic School, was born in Cumberland and graduated from St John's College, Cambridge. At first an ardent supporter of the French Revolution, he went over to France in 1791, as one on a pilgrimage to the land of Liberty. But he was shocked by the mad excesses of the Revolutionaries that had led to the Reign of Terror. He then turned to his native country as the land of Ideal Freedom.

Wordsworth has been aptly called a poet of Nature. To him Nature is not merely a storehouse of beautiful sights and melodious sounds. Nature has a soul, a spirit, that permeates and vivifies everything. Nature is the great teacher that infuses moral and spiritual lessons in a much more effective manner than can books of philosophy. Man has lost the joy and vigour of life by cutting himself adrift from the vivifying influences of Nature.

Wordsworth had his own theory of poetry, which stressed simplicity and naturalness in poetic diction. His poetic mission was to throw over the commonest things

‘the light that never was
on land or sea’.

His famous Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, which he published in 1798 in collaboration with Coleridge, gave a definite start to the Romantic Revival in English poetry.

PAGE 74. *St. 1. blithe*: gay, happy, joyous.

New-comer: the cuckoo, a migratory bird, visits a country at the coming of spring.

but a wandering Voice: only a voice that moves from place to place, from one tree to another. The cuckoo pours forth its melody, unseen by the human eye.

cf. 'an unbodied joy' (Shelley, *To the Skylark*).

St. 2. twofold shout: the cry with a double or repeated sound—ku-ku.

At once far off: as it echoes at a distance.

St. 3. babbling: making a continuous soft sound.

visionary hours: the dreamy days of early boyhood.

PAGE 75. *St. 4. darling*: beloved.

even yet: in my mature years, now that I am no longer a boy.

even yet . . . a mystery: you are still the same mysterious voice that you were when I heard your cry in my boyhood days.

St. 6. rove: wander.

longed for: coveted.

St. 7. I can listen . . . yet: I have grown older, but I retain the same spirit of delight in Nature's sights and sounds that moved me in my earlier years. cf.

'So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!'

(Wordsworth, *The Rainbow*)

beget: generate; (here) bring back.

golden time: those sweet days of happy boyhood.

listen till I . . . again: listen continuously to your melody with such earnest joy that I feel myself once again the happy and innocent child that I used to be.

St. 8. the earth we pace: this solid earth that we walk upon.

unsubstantial, faery place: a shadowy fairyland.

That is . . . for Thee: that is a suitable dwelling-place for a mysterious spirit that you seem to be.

Note how the Cuckoo's song changes the poet's outlook on the world. It reminds the poet of his boyhood delight in nature so vividly that he forgets the present and is carried back in his imagination to those golden days of joyous childhood.

PRO PATRIA MORI

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852), the 'Bard of Erin', born in Dublin, was at the same school where Sheridan had been educated. After taking his B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin he made his mark with a translation of Anacreon and tried his hand at various writings till his *Lalla Rookh*, a series of Oriental tales in verse, won him applause from the whole English-speaking world. In his later years he wrote the *History of Ireland* and the Lives of Sheridan, Byron and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. In spite of a decent pension, his last days were clouded by misfortunes and mental decay. His sorrow over the happy past has found a pathetic expression in his well-known poem 'The Light of other Days'.

Like Southey and Byron, Moore was a very popular writer in his lifetime. Modern readers find his work marred by a tedious monotony and artificiality.

The title: A Latin expression meaning 'To die for the fatherland'.

PAGE 75. *St. 1. adores*: worships.

has left . . . behind: has left behind him only the memory of his shortcomings and sufferings.

darken: tarnish.

a life . . . *resigned*: a life that gave up everything for you.

PAGE 76. *efface*: rub off, wipe out.

decree: judgement, (here) condemnation.

St. 2. *Every thought of my reason*: every thought dictated by my reason.

Thy name . . . with mine: along with the prayer for myself will go up the prayer for your welfare and progress.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-89) attracted the friendly notice of Carlyle, Wordsworth and other men of letters by his *Paracelsus*, which appeared in 1835.

In 1846 he married the poetess Elizabeth Barrett, when she was at the height of her popularity and he was comparatively unknown, and lived with her mainly in Italy at Pisa, Florence and Rome, until her death in 1861. Recognition came to him rather slowly at home. With the publication of *The Ring and the Book* in 1868, he was hailed by his countrymen as a major poet, and on his death was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Browning's greatness lies in his ideas rather than the form that clothes them.

The poem 'Incident of the French Camp' appeared in the *Dramatic Romances* in 1845. It tells us of one of the many stories which were current about the devotion of his soldiers to Napoleon. This story is based on certain historical facts. On 23 April 1809 Napoleon attacked Ratisbon (the German Regensburg) in Bavaria on the south bank of the Danube. The French general, Marshal Lannes, stormed the town with great

gallantry. The town was captured and the Austrians were driven to the other side of the river.

The French Camp means the French army in camp before Ratisbon and fighting at the time referred to in the story. The *Incident*, or striking event, was the heroic act of the boy-soldier who was mortally wounded when hoisting Napoleon's flag within the walls of Ratisbon and yet managed to deliver to his chief the news of the splendid victory. The boy fell down dead just after he had given the news.

PAGE 76. *St. 1. we French*: the supposed speaker or narrator is a French soldier.

you fancy how: referring to many pictures showing Napoleon in this posture.

to balance: to support, to keep in position.

the prone brow: the forehead bulging downwards, weighed down with his thoughts.

oppressive with its mind: heavy with the ideas or plans that it contained.

St. 2. Lannes: Marshal Lannes, one of the best and most faithful generals of Napoleon. By his abilities he soon rose from a private soldier to be a general. In recognition of his worth, Napoleon made him Duke of Montebello and a Marshal of France. Lannes was killed in a battle a month after the capture of Ratisbon.

Waver: falter, hesitate.

PAGE 77. *St. 4. flag-bird*: figure of the eagle on Napoleon's flag, i.e. the flag with the emblem of the bird on it.

flap his vans: move his wings, that is, flutter in the wind.

flashed: shone with the fire of ambition.

St. 5. sheathes: covers.

film: dimness over the eyes, here, a thin coating of tears (that dims the vision).

bruised eaglet: a young eagle crushed or battered (by

some serious injury). Note the aptness of the comparison. Napoleon, with his warlike valour and sternness, was an eagle among men. The heroic boy who brought the news was also like a young eagle. Napoleon's eyes were dimmed with tears when he first noticed that the boy was wounded. It was like a fierce eagle melting in tender pity for its young one in agony. The eagle on the flag and the chief's plans soaring like an eagle naturally suggest this comparison.

the soldier's pride: sense of pride as a soldier.

touched to the quick: sorely wounded. The 'quick' is the tender or sensitive flesh in any part of the body or the tender part of a sore or wound; it can also be used of mental feelings, such as pride. The soldier's pride was hurt because his chief did not realize how seriously wounded he was.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-92) was born at Somersby in Lincolnshire at his father's rectory. He was sent to Cambridge, where he won the Chancellor's Medal for a prize poem on the unpoetical theme of 'Timbuctoo'.

Tennyson's first book of poems, *Poems, by Two Brothers*, was written in collaboration with his brother Charles. In 1830 came out his *Poems, chiefly Lyrical* and three years later was published a further volume simply called *Poems*. The edition that was brought out in 1842 contained some of his finest work, including 'Morte d'Arthur', 'Locksley Hall', 'Ulysses', etc. *The Princess*, a long narrative poem, appeared in 1847, and was followed in 1850 by *In Memoriam* in which the poet embodied his suffering at the loss of his friend, A. H. Hallam. The latter year brought him the laureateship on the death of Wordsworth. Subsequent volumes comprised *Maud, and other Poems* (1855), *The*

Idylls of the King (1859), and *Enoch Arden* (1864) which were followed by *Harold, Becket*, and other dramas.

Tennyson has rarely been surpassed by any other poet in range of subject and vividness of drawing. He is almost the only English poet who can paint with equal ease all things in nature, from the most sublime and awful to the tiniest and most tender. Of late, he has been charged with over-wrought workmanship, too much care for form—an overstudied art. But there are things in him which in their very beauty of simplicity go straight to the hearts of millions. Poems like 'The May Queen', 'Lady Clare', 'The Miller's Daughter', 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', have few equals in their power of popular appeal. He has been aptly called the representative poet of contemporary England, voicing on a national scale, its hopes and fears, its aspirations and emotions.

Historical Background: Balaclava, a small seaport on the coast of the Crimea, near Sebastopol, was the scene of the famous charge of the Light Brigade, made on 26 September 1854. This has been celebrated by Tennyson, who pays a glowing tribute in the poem to the noble six hundred horsemen who rode into the jaws of death. The Russians, about 12,000 strong, under General Liprandi, had captured some small fortified places held by a small force of Turks. The port had thus been threatened. The Russians had, however, been repulsed by the English Heavy Brigade under General Scarlett. Orders from Lord Raglan were then misconceived by Lord Lucan who ordered Lord Cardigan to charge the Russians with the Light Cavalry. The charge was heroically made, but out of 673 officers and men who rode into the enemy's artillery, 247 were killed or wounded. The poem glorifies the sense of military discipline among British soldiers.

PAGE 78. *St. 1. league*: an old measure of distance measuring about three miles. Half a league was the space between the Russian army and the charging Light Brigade.

the valley of Death: death was certain in a battle against such heavy odds. The English cavalry numbered only 673 while the Russians were 12,000 strong.

he: the commander, Lord Cardigan.

St. 2. dismay'd: dispirited or bewildered with fright.

blunder'd: made a foolish mistake.

Their's not to make reply: it was not for them to protest. As soldiers, their duty was to obey without questioning.

St. 3. volley'd: fired repeatedly, shot forth showers of cannon balls.

storm'd at: violently attacked.

PAGE 79. *St. 4. sabres*: swords.

sabring: cutting down with their swords.

All the world wonder'd: such a desperate charge in the teeth of violent firing by such a strong enemy was sure to prove fatal. So the world was struck with wonder at their valour.

plunged: suddenly covered.

Cossack: one of a warlike tribes in Southern Russia.

sunder'd: cut to pieces.

St. 6. wild: desperate.

Note how the whole poem is one of the finest instances of the 'sound echoing the sense'.

REQUIEM

ROBERT LOUIS BALFOUR STEVENSON (1850-94) was a Scottish novelist, essayist and poet. He was seriously ill most of his life with tuberculosis and travelled a great deal in search of health. Some of his travels have been described in his books, notably in *An Inland Voyage*

and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. Some of his well-known novels are *Treasure Island*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Kidnapped*. He spent his last days in Samoa, in the South Pacific, and was buried there. The last two lines from this poem were engraved on his tombstone.

PAGE 80. *Requiem*: a solemn chant for the dead.

The name comes from the first word of the psalm in the Mass for the Dead of the Roman Catholic Church, *Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine*, 'Give eternal rest to them, O Lord.'

THE TRAIN

MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE (1861-1907), belonging to the same family as the great poet S. T. Coleridge, whose nephew was her grandfather F. G. Coleridge, wrote some remarkable poetry and novels which were praised by eminent men of letters. Two collections of her poems, *Poems Old and New* and *Gathered Leaves*, were published after her death. The great novelist R. L. Stevenson spoke highly of her first novel *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*. An historical novel *The King with Two Faces*, centring round King Gustavus III of Sweden, was brought out in 1897.

The poem 'The Train' describes the speedy journey of a night train through the darkness, carrying those that would prefer to stay at home and also others—lovers and friends—back to their near and dear ones, and contracting the world into a narrow place, time and space being annihilated.

PAGE 80. *St. 1. A green eye*: the green signal-light that starts the train.

a red (eye): the red light that stops a train.

thunder: the thundering sound of the moving train.

St. 2. It is there . . . flashed by: the train moves up

rapidly from a distance, and swiftly passes by with its lighted windows.

whither: where.

the wild thing: the train moving with its bewildering speed.

St. 3. tearing: moving swiftly and violently.

rending: splitting, tearing asunder.

gloom: darkness.

PAGE 81. *St. 4. shatters*: smashes.

shrieks: shrill sounds.

What is it . . . seeks?: the poet fancies that the madly rushing train, with its piercing shrieks, like a howling wild animal must be after something.

St. 5. that are fain to stay: who would prefer to stay at home, who are unwilling to be snatched away from their homes.

St. 6. roam: wander away from home.

Alas! for it hurries . . . roam: the train causes both sorrow and joy—sorrow to those who are forced to leave their homes, and joy to those who are carried back to their near and dear ones.

SONG OF THE NIGHT AT DAYBREAK

ALICE MEYNELL (1847-1922) was an essayist and poet, whose deep religious faith is reflected in her writings. She had the gift of friendship and her numerous friends included many leading literary figures such as D. G. Rossetti, Robert Browning, Coventry Patmore, George Meredith and John Ruskin. She and her husband befriended the poet Francis Thompson when he was living in London in loneliness and poverty.

PAGE 81. *St. 3. eyne*: old plural form of 'eye', now no longer used in ordinary speech or writing and only rarely found in poetry.

In Old English, there were many words, of which 'eye' was one, which formed their plural by the ending

-n; a survival of this plural now is 'oxen'. There are also three other -n plurals in English, 'children', 'brethren' and 'kine', of which 'children' is now the only standard plural form, the standard plurals of 'brother' and 'cow' being 'brothers' and 'cows'.

WEATHERS

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928) was one of the most important literary figures of the nineteenth century. He has written many novels (known collectively as Wessex novels, the scene of action being the west country in England), a number of short stories, a great epic-drama, *The Dynasts*, and a number of fine short poems. The underlying theme of most of his writings is the struggle of Man against his physical and social environment and the caprices of chance.

These two stanzas show Hardy's love of the English countryside: his mood changes with the seasons. In the first stanza it is early summer, the cuckoo sings by day and the nightingale by night. It is warm enough for men to sit outside at the village inn in the evening, and women can wear their pretty muslin dresses.

In the second stanza it is late autumn or winter, with heavy rain and high winds. Everything is wet and miserable and the only thing to do is to stay indoors.

PAGE 82. *St. 1. betumble*: toss about.

chestnut (pronounced chesnut): a stately tree with spreading branches and masses of white or red flowers.

spikes: clusters of a pointed shape, used of flowers.

nestlings: young birds in nests. (Only found in early summer.)

bills: sings with the bill. The nightingale only arrives in England in mid-April and sings till the end of June.

sit outside: indicates that the weather is warm enough to allow people to sit out-of-doors with comfort.

'The Travellers' Rest': the name is used to typify an inn, which provides lodging and food for travellers and where villagers usually meet for drinks and recreation. In England, inns often have picturesque names and painted sign-boards illustrating the name.

maids: young women.

sprig-muslin: muslin printed with sprigs or small sprays of flowers and leaves. Muslin is a fine cotton fabric. (Dacca was at one time famous for its fine muslin.) In England, muslin dresses are worn only in the summer.

citizens dream of the south and west: in England city workers go away every year for a summer holiday. When the warm weather comes they begin to dream of the fine holidays they will have in southern or western England (the warmest part).

St. 2. the shepherd shuns: because he has to stay out with his sheep and gets wet and cold.

beeches: the beech is a fine forest-tree with a smooth bark; its boughs and glossy, oval leaves form a dense mass in the summer. The leaves are shed in the autumn and in the winter the bare branches make a tracery against the sky.

drip: shed drops of water continuously (refers to the rain-drops).

in browns and duns: the leaves which were green in summer have turned brown or greyish brown (dun).

thresh: 'to thresh' means primarily, 'to separate grain from chaff by beating with a flail'; here it means 'beat about'. ('Thrash', 'to beat soundly', is a variant spelling of 'thresh'.)

ply: here it means 'move continuously to and fro'; 'to ply' means 'to cross a river or stream in regular trips'.

thresh, and ply: indicate that the branches of the trees are being violently shaken by the winter winds.

hill-hid tides: streams in flood, hidden in the hill-sides.

throb: vibrate, pulsate violently.

throe: violent spasm.

drops: here refer to the dew-drops or rain-drops, hanging on the gate-bars.

gate-bars: in England, fields are separated from each other by hedges or walls, in which there are gates with bars.

rooks: black birds with a harsh cry. Rooks are European crows, which nest in colonies and move about in companies. (In some parts of England, baked rook pies are considered a delicacy.)

And so do I: the poet suggests that in such weather the best place to be is indoors.

I LOVE ALL BEAUTEIOUS THINGS

ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES (1844-1930) was Poet Laureate of England from 1913 to 1930. He is the author of many beautiful lyrics; his long philosophical poem *The Testament of Beauty*, published a year before his death, has been described as a 'compendium of the wisdom, learning and experience of an artistic spirit'. He was a remarkable metrist who also wrote much fine prose, which reveals an acute critical mind. Bridges was perhaps too subtle and severe a poet to appeal to a very large public.

PAGE 82. *St. 1. hasty*: hurried, without much leisure, as of one having little time.

THE TRAIN

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES (1871-1940) was a Welsh-born poet, author of lyrics of nature and love, marked by their simplicity and feeling. He first became widely

known for his *Autobiography of a Super-tramp* which was published in 1908, and is written in 'rough, simple, direct prose'.

HEROES

These two stanzas from the poem 'Heroes' strike a note of robust optimism. The world may appear dull to some, the age of such heroes as Theseus having passed by. But we have in modern times another type of hero, to be found among the common people, and in a sense wiser and greater than the heroes of the classical legends.

PAGE 83. *St. 1. Mother Earth*: the poet asks Mother Earth if she no longer produces heroes like those of ancient times.

the soul of the years: a fine poetic expression referring to the human spirit that flows on through generations.

Do they . . . no more?: Is the human spirit no more exalted or inspired from generation to generation by the feats of heroes?

gleaming: glowing, shining (in the sunlight).

poppies: large, showy flowers of the plant from which opium is obtained.

of yore: of ancient times.

are the gleaming snows . . . of yore?: the following four lines from the preceding stanza, omitted from the text, will make the meaning clearer:

On Ida's mount is the shining snow,

But Jove has gone from its brow away;

And red on the plain the poppies grow

Where the Greek and the Trojan fought that day.

Mount Ida is a mountain in Asia Minor, from the top of which the gods watched the Trojan War.

The poppy is traditionally the flower of death and of sleep.

The poet asks whether the snow and the poppies are all that is left to remind us of the heroes of the Trojan War.

PAGE 84. *Theseus*: son of King Aegeus of Athens. He killed a monster called the Minotaur that devoured the Greek youths and maidens sent by Athens as tribute to King Minos of Crete.

young world's misty dawn: the dim age of earliest history.

Nestor: King of Pylos, led his people to the Trojan War in his extreme old age and became distinguished for his wisdom, justice and eloquence.

St. 2. Gone? . . . Dead? . . .: the poet here means that the heroes are not really gone or dead, because they are, as it were, reborn in nobler forms and we can actually feel their inspiring presence among us.

St. 3. In a grander form they rise: the heroes of modern times are nobler than those of ancient times; they may not achieve feats of physical courage like Theseus, but they champion a nobler cause, the cause of humanity at large, and they derive their strength from their spiritual greatness which is certainly grander than physical prowess.

clasp: hold tightly.

their clearer eyes: they have a clearer vision as they are inspired by nobler ideals.

wreathe: encircle as with a wreath (a circular band of flowers).

immortal flowers: undying flowers of love and admiration, as contrasted with the wreaths on the brows of legendary heroes.

stirred: quickened.

'Tis the pulse . . . is stirred: all noble deeds owe their origin to the thrill of inspiration flowing from a heroic heart, thus proving its deathlessness. The construction of the sentence is—'Tis the pulse . . . hero's heart that is stirred.

triumph: victory.

There are . . . heard: Right triumphs over Wrong because there are still heroes to raise their voices against evil and to fight for justice.

I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN

This fine little poem from the pen of an unknown poet urges us to avail ourselves of any opportunity that may come our way of performing any good deed, any kindness to any human being, for this human life may not be ours again.

PAGE 84. *I shall not . . . once*: this human life, with its opportunities for doing good deeds, will not be mine again. (Christians do not believe in rebirth.)

defer: put off, postpone.

I shall not . . . again: I shall not have any further opportunity for performing any kind deed, so I must avail myself of any opportunity that presents itself in *this* life, which is the only one that I shall live.